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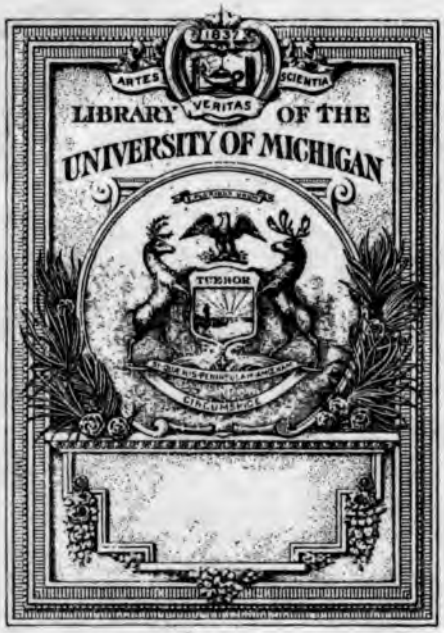
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VOLUME IX

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THE COLLECTED WORKS OF AMBROSE BIERCE

VOLUME IX

TANGENTIAL VIEWS

NEW YORK & WASHINGTON
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CONTENTS

PAGE

TANGENTIAL VIEWS

Some Privations of the Coming Man . . . 17
Civilization of the Monkey 32
The Socialist—What He is, and Why . . . 37
George the Made-over 48
John Smith's Ancestors 53
The Moon in Letters 58
Columbus 68
The Religion of the Table 76
Revision Downward 79
The Art of Controversy 83
In the Infancy of "Trusts" 91
Poverty, Crime and Vice 100
Decadence of the American Foot 112
The Clothing of Ghosts 117
Some Aspects of Education 121
The Reign of the Ring 130
Fin de Siècle 138
Timothy H. Rearden 142
The Passing of the Horse 147
Newspapers 151
A Benign Invention 161
Actors and Acting 169
The Value of Truth 179
Symbols and Fetishes 185
Did We Eat One Another? 192
The Bacillus of Crime 194

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Game of Button	197
Sleep	203
Concerning Pictures	208
Modern Warfare	216
Christmas and the New Year	235
On Putting One's Head into One's Belly	242
The American Chair	245
Another "Cold Spell"	249
The Love of County	254
Disintroductions	257
The Tyranny of Fashion	261
Breaches of Promise	282
The Turko-Grecian War	287
Cats of Cheyenne	295
Thanksgiving Day	298
The Hour and the Man	302
Mortuary Electroplating	306
The Age Romantic	311
The War Everlasting	317
On the Uses of Euthanasia	327
The Scourge of Laughter	338
The Late Lamented	341
Dethronement of the Atom	344
Dogs for the Klondike	348
Monsters and Eggs	355
Music	359
Malfeasance in Office	364
For Standing Room	368
The Jew	373
Why the Human Nose has a Western Exposure	382

TANGENTIAL VIEWS

SOME PRIVATIONS OF THE COMING MAN

A GERMAN physician of some note once gave it out as his solemn conviction that civilized man is gradually but surely losing the sense of smell through disuse. It is a fact that we have noses less keen than the savages; which is well for us, for we have a dozen "well-defined and several" bad odors to their one. It is possible, indeed, that it is to the alarming prevalence of bad odors that our olfactory inferiority is in some degree due: civilized man's habit of holding his nose has begotten in that organ an obedient habit of holding itself. This by the way, leaves both his hands free to hold his tongue, though as a rule he prefers to make another and less pleasing use of them. With a nose dowered with primitive activity civilized man would find it difficult to retain his supremacy over the forces of Nature; her assassinating odors would engage him in a new struggle for existence, incomparably more

arduous than any of which he has present experience. And herein we get an intimation of a hitherto unsuspected cause of the rapid decadence of savage peoples when brought into contact with civilization. Various causes doubtless are concerned, but the slaughter-house, the glue factory, the gas main, the sewer and the other sources of exhalations that "rise like the steam of rich-distilled perfumes" (which in no other quality they resemble) are the actual culprits. Unprepared with a means of defense at the point where he is most accessible to assault, the reclaimed savage falls into a decline and accepting the Christian religion for what he conceives it to be worth, turns his nose to the wall and dies in the secret hope of an inodorous eternity.

With effacement of the sense of smell we shall doubtless lose the feature which serves as intake to what it feeds upon; and that will in many ways be an advantage. It will, for example, put a new difficulty in the way of that disagreeable person, the caricaturist—rather, it will shear him of much of his present power. The fellow never tires of furnishing forth the rest of us incredibly snouted in an infinite variety of wicked ways. When noses are no more, caricature will have stilled

some of its thunder and we can all venture to be eminent.

Meantime, history is full of noses, as is the literature of imagination—some of them figuratively, some literally, shining beacons that splendor "the dark backward and abysm of time." Of the world's great, it may almost be said that by their noses we know them. Where would have been Cyrano de Bergerac in modern story without his nose? By the unlearned it is thought that the immortal Bardolph is a creation of Shakspeare's genius. Not so; an ingenious scholar long ago identified him as an historical character who but for the poet's fine appreciation of noses might have blushed eternally unseen. It is nothing that his true name is no longer in evidence in the annals of men; as Bardolph his fame is secure from the ravening tooth of time.

Even when a nasal peculiarity is due to an accident of its environment it confers no inconsiderable distinction, apart from its possessor's other and perhaps superior claims to renown, as in the instances of Michael Angelo, Tycho Brahe and the beloved Thackeray, in whose altered frontispiece we are all the more interested because of his habit of dipping it in the Gascon wine.

The spreading nose of Socrates was no doubt a source of great regret to him, whether its faults and failings were of Xanthippe's making or, as Zopyrus had the incivility to inform him, inherited from drunken, thieving and lascivious ancestors; yet who would willingly forego the emotions and sentiments inspired by that unusual nose? It seems a precious part of his philosophy.

The connection between the poetic eminence of Ovid and the noses from which his family, the Nasones, derived its name is doubtless more than accidental, and to our knowledge of his hereditary nasal equipment, albeit we know not the precise nature of the endowment, must be ascribed a part of our interest in his work. He to whom the secret of metamorphosis was an open book is not affirmed to have made any attempt to alter the family feature, as he doubtless would have done had he not recognized its essential relation to his genius.

Plutarch declares that Cicero owed his surname to the fact that his nose had the shape of a vetch—*cicer*. Anyhow, his nose was as remarkable as his eloquence, in its different way. Gibbon and the late Prince Gortschakoff had noses uncommonly minute for men

of commanding ability, which may have been a good thing for them, compelling them to rely upon their own endeavors to make their mark in the world. He who cannot climb to eminence upon his own nose will naturally seek another footing. Addison had a smooth Grecian nose, significantly suggestive of his literary style. Tennyson's nose was long; so are some of his sermons in verse. Julius Cæsar, too, was gifted with a long nose, which a writer in a recent review has aptly called "enterprising." That Cæsar was an enterprising man some of his contemporaries could feelingly have attested.

The nose of Dante—ah, there was a nose! What words could do it justice? It is one of history's most priceless possessions. One hesitates to say what powers and potencies lay latent in that superb organ; one can only regret that he did not give more time to the cultivation of its magnificent possibilities and less to evening up matters between himself and his enemies when peopling Hell as he had the happiness to conceive it.

Considering how many of the world's great and good men have been distinguished from their inferiors by noses of note and consequence, it is difficult to understand that such

"gifts of grace divine" as these uncommon protuberances should be so sensitive to the blaze and blare of publicity. One would expect that in the fierce light that beats about an uncommon nose its fortunate owner would bask as contentedly as a python in the noonday sun, happy in the benign beam and proud of every inch of his revealed identity.

To art, effacement of the nose will be of inestimable benefit. In statuary, for example, we shall be able to hurl a qualified defiance at Time the iconoclast, who now hastens to assail our cherished carven images in that most vulnerable part, the nose, tweaking it off and throwing it away almost before the sculptor's own nose is blue and cold beneath the daisies. In the statue of the future there will be no nose, consequently no damage to it; and although the statue may when new and perfect differ but little from the mutilated antiques that we now have, there will be a certain satisfaction in knowing that it has not been "retouched." In the case of portrait-statues and busts the advantage is obvious. When the nose goes the likeness goes with it; all men will look pretty nearly alike, and a bust or statue will serve about as well for one man as for another.

Perhaps the best effect of all will be felt in literature. To that capital bore of letters, the scribbling physiognomist, the nose is almost as necessary as to the caricaturist. He is never done finding strength of mind and spirit in large noses, though the small ones of Gibbon and Gortschakoff shrieked against his creed, and intellectual feebleness in "pugs," though Kosciusko's was the puggest of its time. When there are no noses the physiognomist can base no theories on them. It would be worth something to live long enough to be rid of even a part of his gabble.

The conditions under which we live may so alter that the sense of smell may be again advantageous in the struggle for existence, and by the survival of those in whom it is keenest regain its pristine place in our meager equipment of powers and capacities. But philosophers to whom millstones are transparent will deem it significant that the sense in question and the facial feature devoted to its service have fallen into something of the disrepute that foretokens deposal. It is now hardly polite to speak of smells and smelling, without the use of softened language; and the nose is frequently subjected to contumelious and jocose remark unwarranted by anything in its

personal appearance or the nature of its pursuits. It is as if man had withdrawn his lip-service from the nasal setting sun.

It is, then, well understood, even outside of "scientific circles," that the incompossibility of civilization and the human nose is more than a golden dream of the optimist. Indubitably that once indispensable organ is falling into the sere and yellow leaf of disuse, and in the course of a few thousand generations will have been wiped off the face of the earth. Its utility as an organ of sense decreases year by year—except as a support for the kind of eyeglasses bearing its name in French; not a sufficiently important service to warrant nature in preserving it. The final effacement has been foreseen from the earliest dawn of art. The ancient Grecian sculptors, for example, who were great trimmers and were ever eager to know which way the physiognomical cat would jump, tried to represent the human face of the future rather than that of their period; and it is noticeable that most of their statues and busts are distinguished by a striking lack of nose, as above intimated. That is justly regarded as a most significant circumstance—a prophecy of the conclusion now reached by modern science

working along other lines. The Coming Man is to be noseless—that is settled; and there are not wanting those who support with enthusiasm the doctrine that he is to be hairless as well.

It is to be observed that these two effects, planing down of the human nose and uprooting of the human hair, are to be brought about differently—at least the main agency in the one case is different from that in the other. The nose is departing from among us because of its high sense of duty. Most of the odors of civilization being distinctly disagreeable, and in the selection of our food chemical analysis having taken the place of olfactory investigation, there is little for the modern nose to do that the modern nose-owner is willing to have done.

One of the most useful of all our natural endowments is what I may venture to call the conscience of the organs. None of the bodily organs is willing to be maintained in a state of idleness and dependence—to eat the bread of charity, so to speak. Whenever for any cause one of them is put upon the retired list and deprived of its functions and just influence in the physical economy it begins to withdraw from the scheme of things by atrophy.

It withers away, and the place that knew it knows it no more forever. That is what is occurring in the instance of the human nose. We make very little use of it in testing our food—it has, in truth, lost its cunning in that way—in tracking our game, or in taking note of a windward enemy; albeit to most of the enemies of the race the nose is almost as good an annunciator as the organs which they more consciously address. So the idle nose is leaving us—more in sorrow than in anger, let us hope.

With the hair the case is different. It goes, not merely because its mandate is exhausted, but because it is really detrimental to us in the struggle for existence. Its departure is an instance, pure and simple of the survival of the fittest. Little reflection is required to show the superior fitness of the man that is bald. Baldness is respectability, baldness is piety, rectitude and general worth. Persons holding responsible and well-salaried positions are commonly bald—bank presidents especially. The prosperous merchant is usually of shining pate; the heads of most of the great corporations are thinly thatched. Of two otherwise equal applicants for a position of trust and profit, who would not instinctively

choose the bald one, or, both being bald, the balder? Having, therefore, a considerable advantage, the bald person naturally lives longer than his less gifted competitor (any one can observe that he is usually the older) and leaves a more numerous progeny, inheriting the paternal endowment of precarious hair. In a few generations more those varieties of our species known as the Mophead and the Curled Darling will doubtless have become extinct, and the barber (*Homo loquax*) will have followed them into oblivion.

Another German physician (named Müller—the German physician who is not named Müller has had a narrow escape) points out the increasing prevalence of baldness and declares it hereditary. That many human beings are born partly bald is not, I take it, what he means, but that the tendency to lose the hair early in life is transmitted from father to son. It is understood that the ladies have nothing to do with the matter; they are never bald, but the hair of none of them, I understand, is so long and thick as it once was.

It is difficult to offset such facts as these with facts of a contrary sort. Cowboys and artists—sometimes poets—are found with long hair, but long hair is not thought to be an ad-

vantage to them, if, indeed, any hair at all is. For wiping the bowie-knife, the paint brush or the pen, hair, no doubt, is useful, but hardly more so than the coat-sleeve. Even in these instances, then, where at first thought there might seem to be a relation of cause and effect between length of hair and length of life, the appearance is fallacious. A bald-headed cowboy would, however, be less liable to scalping by the Red Man. It appears, then, that Dr. Müller's cheerful prediction regarding the heads of Posterity rests upon a foundation of truth.

Some of the doctor's arguments, however, seem erroneous. For example, he thinks the masculine fashion of cutting off the hair an evidence that men instinctively know hair to be injurious—that is to say, a disadvantage in the struggle for existence. This I can not admit; it does not follow, for testators have a fashion of cutting off legatees-expectant, yet legatees-expectant are not injurious—until known to be cut off; and then the testator's struggle for existence is commonly finished. Capitalists have a fashion of cutting off coupons; it hardly needs to be pointed out that coupons are not amongst the malign influences tending to the shortening of life.

I have tried (with some success, I hope) to show that hair is a disadvantage, but this view derives no support from the scissors. If the hair of men were obviously, conspicuously beneficial; if it made them healthy, wealthy and as wise as they care to be; if they needed it in their business; if they could not at all get on without it—they would doubtless cut it a little oftener and a little closer than they do now. Men are that way.

The truth of the matter is plain enough. Men become bald because they keep cutting their hair. Every man has a certain amount of capillary energy, so to say. He can produce such a length of hair and no more, as the spider can spin only so much web and then must cease to be a spinster. By cutting the hair we keep it exhausting its allowance of energy by growth; when all is gone growth stops, and the roots, having no longer a use, decay. By letting their hair grow as long as it will women retain it. The difference is the same as that between two coils of rope, equal in length, one of which is constantly payed out, the other not. If this explanation do not compose the immemorial controversy about the cause of men's baldness the prospect of its composure by that phenomenon's universality

will be hailed with delight by all who love a quiet life. The first generation to forget that men ever had hair will be the first to know the happiness of peace; the succeeding one will begin a dispute about the cause of hair in woman.

An important discovery made and stated with confidence is that to the human tooth, also, civilization is hateful and insupportable. Dr. Denison Pedley, whose name carries great weight (and would to whomsoever it might belong) examined the teeth of no fewer than 3,114 children, and only 707 had full sets of sound ones. That was in England; what would be shown by a look-in at the mouths of the young of a more highly civilized race—say the Missourians—one shudders to conjecture. That nearly all the savages whom one meets have good enough teeth is a matter of common observation; and missionaries in some of the remoter parts of Starkest Africa attest this fact with much feeling. Yet in all enlightened countries the prosperous dentist abounds in quantity.

But perhaps the most significant testimony is that of another English gentleman, with another honored name—J. K. Mummery, who examined every skull that he could lay his

eyes on during twenty years. He affirms an almost total absence of *caries* among the oldest specimens, those belonging to the Stone Age. Among the Celts, who succeeded these, and who knew enough to make metal weapons, but not enough to refrain from using them, the decayed tooth was an incident of more frequent occurrence; and the Roman conquest introduced it in great profusion. When the Romans were driven out they took their back teeth along with them, but the flawless incisor, the hale bicuspid are afterward rarely encountered. Craniologists affirm a similar state of things wherever there have been successive or overlapping civilizations: the skulls all tell the same story—their vote is unanimous. If the alarming progress of enlightenment be not stayed the hairless and noseless man of the future will undoubtedly subsist, not as we, upon his neighbor, but upon spoon-victuals and memories of the past.

CIVILIZATION OF THE MONKEY

PROFESSOR GARNER, who has penetrated the mystery of the sibilants and gutturals with which monkeys prefer to converse, is said to entertain the glittering hope that by means of his discoveries these contemporary ancestors of ours may be elevated to civilization. The prospect is fascinating exceedingly. It opens to conjecture an almost limitless domain of human interest. It illuminates, with a light as of revelation, numberless paths of endeavor leading to glorious goals of achievement.

The crying need of our time is more civilization. We have made a rather lamentable failure in the attempt to elevate certain of the lower races, such as the Chinese, the Sabbatarians and the Protectionists; and to still others we have imparted only dim and transient gleams of our great light. Some, indeed, we have civilized so imperfectly that they might almost as well have been left in outer darkness; for example, the Negroes of the South. Our utmost efforts—aided, in many

instances, by the shotgun, the bloodhound and the fagot-and-stake—have given a faulty result, and many of these obdurate persons remain, as the late Parson Brownlow would have said, "steeped to the nose and chin in political profligacy," voting the Republican ticket whenever permitted. For four centuries we have hunted the Red Indian from cover to cover, and he is not a very nice Red Indian yet, some of his vices and superstitions differing widely from our own. The motorcarman, shutting his eyes to the glory and advantage of enlightenment, still urges his indocile apparatus along the line of least insistence; and the organist from the overseas practices his black art at the street corner, inaccessible to reclamation. A hundred urban tribes might be named among civilization's irreclaimables, without mentioning any of the religious sects. At every turn the gentleman who is desirous of making-over his faulty fellow-men encounters a baffling apathy or a spirited hostility to change.

Possibly the higher quadrumana may prove more pregnable to light and reason—more willing to become as we. Perhaps when we can all talk Monkey we shall be able to set forth the advantages of our happy state more

graphically than we have succeeded in doing in any of the tongues—including our own—known to the wicked and stiff-necked generations mentioned. In that sparkling speech we may, for example, make it clear that a condition in which nine-tenths of the reformed monkeys will live a life of toil and discomfort, holding their subsistence by the most precarious tenure, is conspicuously subserviceable to that chastened and humble frame of mind which is so joyously different from the empty intellectual pride that comes of pelting one another with cocoanuts and depending from branches by prehensile tails. Perhaps in the pithecan vocabulary is such copiousness that we can easily set forth the unspeakable profit of living a long way from where we want to go at a considerable peril to life and limb—which is what steam and electricity enable us to do. We may reasonably hope to be able to convince the gorilla of the futility of his habit of beating his breast and roaring when in the presence of the enemy; the history of a few of our great battles, carefully translated into his noble tongue, will make him first endure, then pity, then embrace our more effective military methods, to the unspeakable benefit of his heart and

mind. Adequately civilized, the gorilla will beat his enemy's breast and let that creature do the roaring.

Certain advantages of urban life—an invention of civilization—ought to be comparatively easy of exposition in an attractive way. The practice of abolishing the hours of rest by means of lights and rattling vehicles; of generating sewer-gas and conducting it into dwellings; of loading the atmosphere with beautiful brown smoke and assorted exhalations before taking it into the lungs; of drinking whisky, or water from cow pastures; of eating animals that have been a long time dead,—of all these and many other blessings of civilization the monkeys can acquire knowledge, desire and, eventually, possession. Doubtless we shall have some small difficulty in explaining the advantages of the incaudate state (for civilization implies renunciation of the tail), the comfortableness of the stiff hat and shirt collar (for civilization entails clothing), the grace of the steel-pen coat, the beauty of the skin-tight sleeve and the sanitary effect of the corset; but if the monkey language, unlike that of the Houyhnhnms, supplies facilities for "saying the thing that is not" we shall eventually convince our arboreal pupils that

black is not only white but a beautiful écru green.

The next step will naturally be the investing them with citizenship and the right to vote according to the dictates of the bosses. When by that investiture they have been duly instated in "the seats of power," the monkeys will form one of the most precious of our political elements, though hardly distinguishable from some of the political elements with which we are now blest. Their enfranchising will be no radical innovation; it will merely make the political pile complete—though the possible defection of the philosopher element in the near future may somewhat mar the symmetry of the edifice until the gap can be stopped by enfranchisement of dogs and horses.

Even if all this is but the gorgeous dream of a too hopeful optimism, it is nevertheless good to know that Professor Garner can understand Monkey. If we fail to persuade the monkeys forward along the line of progress to our advanced position it will be pleasant to have from them an occasional word of cheer and welcome as we are led back to theirs.

THE SOCIALIST—WHAT HE IS, AND WHY

AMERICAN socialism is not a political doctrine; it is a state of mind. A man is an active socialist because he is afflicted with congenital insurgency: he was born a rebel. He rebels, not only against "the established order" in government, but against pretty nearly everything that takes his attention and enlists his thought, though not many things do. He is hospitable to only one idea at a time, in the service of which he foregoes the advantage of knowing much of anything else. He commonly, however, has an observing eye and a deep disesteem for the decent customs and conventionalities of his time and place. The man in jail for publication of immoralities is always a socialist, and the socialist "organ" has usually a profitable "line" of indecent advertisements.

As the socialist erroneously regards the criminal, so he is himself rightly to be regarded. He is no heretic to be reclaimed,

but a patient to be restrained. He is sick. You cannot cure him; it is useless to say to him: "Thou ailest here and there"; it is useless to say anything to him but "Thou shalt not." His unreason is what he is a socialist with. That, too, is the cause of his inefficiency in the competitions of life, for which, naturally, he would substitute something "more nearly to the heart's desire"—an order of things in which all would share the rewards of efficiency. Always it is the incapable who most loudly preaches the gospel of Equality and Fraternity—which, being interpreted, means stand and deliver and look pleasant about it. In the Cave of Adullam the credentialing shibboleth is "Love me, damn you, as I love myself."

A distinguishing feature of socialism as we have the happiness to know it in this country is its servitude to anarchism. In theory the two are directly antithetical. They are the North and the South Pole of political thought, leagues and leagues removed from zones of intellectual fertility. Anarchism says: "Ye shall have no law"; socialism: "Law is all that ye shall have." They "pool their issues" and make common cause, but let them succeed in their work of destruction and their warfare

would not be accomplished: there would remain the congenial task of destroying each other. The present alliance is no figure of speech. It is a fact, unknown to the follow-my-leader socialist, but not to his leader; not to observers having acquaintance with the proselyting methods of the time; not at the headquarters of anarchism in Paterson, New Jersey, where a great body of socialist "literature" is written, printed and set going. He who is not sufficiently "advanced" for anarchism is persuaded to socialism. The babe is fed with malted milk until strong enough for the double-distilled thunder-and-lightning of a more candid purveyance. Whatever makes for discontent brings nearer the reign of reprisal.

Our good friends who think with their tongues and pens are ever clamant about the national perils alurk in luxury: it causes decay in men and states, blights patriotism, invites invasion, impoverishes the paupers and bites a dog. Luxury will make a boy strike his father (feebly) and persuade the old man to a life of shame. It is well known that it so enervated the Romans that they fell off the map. One does not need to believe all that, nor any of it. The wealthy, living under

sanitary conditions, well housed, well fed, clean, free from fatigue (which is a poison) are, as a class, distinctly superior to the poor, physically, mentally and morally. It is among the well-to-do that gymnasia flourish and athletic clubs abound. Your all-around athlete is commonly in possession of a comfortable income; the hardy out-of-door sports are practiced almost exclusively by those who do not have to do manual labor. The top-hatted clubman can manhandle the hulking day-laborer with ease and accuracy. His female is larger and fitter than the other gentleman's underfed and overworked mate, and brings forth a better quality of young. All this is obvious to any but the most delinquent observation; yet wealth and its attendant luxury are prophecies and forerunners of the decay of nations.

> Hard are the steps, slow-hewn in flintiest rock,
> States climb to power by; slippery those with gold
> Down which they stumble to eternal mock.

To one having knowledge of the prevalence and power of some of the primal brute passions of the human mind the reason is clear enough: riches and luxurious living provoke envy in the vast multitude to whom they are

inaccessible through lack of efficiency; and from envy to revenge and revolution the transition is natural and easy.

In the youth of a nation there is virtual equality of fortunes—all are poor. Sixty years ago there were probably not a half dozen millionaires in America; the number now is not definitely known, but it runs into thousands; that of persons of less but considerable wealth—enough to take attention—into the hundreds of thousands. Poverty used to be rather proud of our millionaires; they were so few that the poor man seldom or never saw them, to mark the contrast between their abundance and his privation. Now the two are everywhere neighbors. The poor man sees "the idle rich" (who mostly work like beavers) in their carriages, while himself walks and, if it please him so to do, "takes their dust." He looks into the windows of ballrooms and erroneously believes that the gorgeous creatures within are happier than he. If he happen to be so intellectual as to be distinguished in letters, art or some other profitless pursuit as to be sought by them, all the keener is his sense of the difference; all the more humiliating his inability to suffer their particular kind of disillusion. Partly because

of that and partly because he is not a thinker but a feeler, the poet, the artist or the musician is almost invariably an audible socialist. True, some of these "intellectuals" (they might better be called emotionals) are themselves fairly thrifty and prosperous, and in the redistribution of wealth which many of them impudently propose would be first to experience the mischance of "restitution." But doubtless they do not expect their blessed "new order of things" to come in their day. Meantime there are profit and a certain picturesqueness in "hailing the dawn" of a better one, just as if it had already struck "the Sultan's tower with a shaft of light."

The socialist notion appears to be that the world's wealth is a fixed quantity, and A can acquire only by depriving B. He is fond of figuring the rich as living upon the poor—riding on their backs, as Tolstoi (staggering under the weight of his wife, to whom he had given his vast estate) was pleased to signify the situation. The plain truth of the matter is that the poor live mostly on the rich—entirely unless with their own hands they dig a bare subsistence out of their own farms or gravel claims; if they do better than that they are not poor. A man may remain in poverty

all his life and be not only of no advantage to his fellow poor men, but by his competition in the labor market a harm to them; for in the abundance of labor lies the cause of low wages, as even a socialist knows. As a consumer the man counts for little, for he consumes only the bare necessaries of life. But, if he pass from poverty to wealth he not only ceases to be a competing laborer; he becomes a consumer of everything that he used to want —all the luxuries by production of which nine-tenths of the labor class live he now buys. He has added his voice to the chorus of demand. All the industries of the world are so interrelated and interdependent that none is unaffected in some infinitesimal degree by the new stimulation. The good that he has done by passing from one class into another is not so obvious as it would be if his wants were all supplied by one versatile producer, purveying to him alone, but the sum of it is the same. Yet the socialist finds a pleasure in directing attention to the brass hoofs of the millionaire executing his joyous jig upon an empty stomach—that of the prostrate pauper, —poets, muckrakers, demagogues and other audibles fitly celebrating the performance with howls of sensibility.

A socialist was damning the wicked extravagance of the rich. A thoughtful person said: "In New York City was a wealthy family, the Bradley Martins. They were driven out of the country by public indignation because they spent their money with a free hand. In the same city was a wealthy man named Russell Sage. He was no less reviled and calumniated, because he spent as little as he could and lent the rest. In which instance was our 'fierce democracie' wise and righteous?"

The answer was prompt and, O, so copious! Before it ceased to flow that philosopher was a mile away from the subject, lost in an impenetrable forest of words.

Of course Russell Sage was no less valuable an asset to the "wage slave" than the Bradley Martins, for there is no way by which one can get profit or pleasure out of money except by paying it out, either by his own hand directly, or indirectly by the hand of another, for wages to labor. Eventually, sooner or later, it all reaches the pocket of the producer, the workingman.

We have so good a country here that more than a million a year of Europe's poor come over to share its advantages. In the patent

fact that it is a land of opportunity and prosperity we feel a justifiable pride; yet the crowning proof and natural result of this—the great number that do prosper—"the multitude of millionaires"—has come to be resented as an intolerable wrong, and he who is most clamorous for opportunity (which he has never for a moment been without) most austerely condemns those who have made the best use of it. An instinctive antipathy to all in prosperity is the common ground upon which anarchists and socialists stand to debate their several interpretations of anarchism and socialism. On that rock they build their church, and the gates of—the quotation is imperfectly applicable: the gates are friendly and hospitable to denominationaries of their faith.

Another thing that these worthies have in common—and in common with many unassorted sentimentaliters and effemininnies in this age of unreason—is sympathy with crime. No avowed socialist but advocates a rosewater penology that coddles the felon who has broken into prison to enjoy a life of peace and plenty; none but would expel the warden and flog the turnkey. All are proponents of the holy homily; all deny that punishment deters from crime, although the discharged

convict never renews his offense until driven by hunger or again persuaded by his poor brute brain that he can escape detection; he does not enter and rob the first house that he comes to, nor murder the first enemy that he meets.

That there are honest, clean-minded patriotic socialists goes without saying. They are theorists and dreamers with a knowledge of life and affairs a little profounder than that of a horse but not quite so profound as that of a cow. But the "movement" as a social and political force is, in this country, born of envy, the true purpose of its activities, revenge. In the shadow of our national prosperity it whets its knife for the throats of the prosperous. It unleashes the hounds of hate upon the track of success—the only kind of success that it covets and derides.

How bit and bridle this wild ass of civilization? How make the socialist behave himself, as in Germany, or unmask himself, as in France? It looks as if this cannot be done. It looks as if we may eventually have to prevent the multiplication of millionaires by setting a legal limit to private fortunes. By some such cowardly and statesmanlike concession we may perhaps anticipate and fore-

stall the more drastic action of our political Apaches, incited by Envy, wrecker of empires and assassin of civilization. Meantime, let us put poppies in our hair and be Democrats and Republicans.

1910.

GEORGE THE MADE-OVER

THE English have a distinctly higher and better opinion of Washington than is held in this country. Washington, if he could have a choice in the matter, would indubitably prefer his position in the minds of educated Englishmen to the one that he holds "in the hearts of his countrymen"—not the one that he is said to hold. The superior validity of the English view is due to the better view-point. It is remote, as the American will be when several more generations shall have passed and Americans are devoid (as Englishmen are devoid now) of passions and prejudices engendered in the heat of our "Revolution." We should remember that it was not to the English a revolution, but a small and distant squabble, which cut no great figure in the larger affairs in which they were engaged; and the very memory of it was nearly effaced in that of the next generation by the stupendous events of the French Revolution and the Na-

poleonic wars. To ears filled with the thunders of Waterloo, the crepitating echoes of the spat at Bunker Hill were inaudible.

No benign personage in the calendar of secular saints is really less loved than Washington. The romancing historians and biographers have adorned him with a thousand impossible virtues, naturally, and in so dehumanizing him have set him beyond and above the longest reach of human sympathies. His character, as it pleased them to create it, is like nothing that we know about and care for. He is a monster of goodness and wisdom, with about as much of light and fire as the snow Adam of the small boy playing at creation on the campus of a public school. The Washington-making Frankensteins have done their work so badly that their creature is an insupportable bore, diffusing an infectious dejection. Try to fancy an historical novel or drama with him for hero—a poem with him for subject! Possibly such have been written; I do not recall any at the moment, and the proposition is hardly thinkable. The ideal Washington is a soulless conception, absolutely without power on the imagination. Within the area of his gelid efflation the flowers of fancy open only to wither, and any sentiment

endeavoring to transgress the boundary of that desolate domain falls frosted in its flight.

Some one—Colonel Ingersoll, I fancy—has said that Washington is a steel engraving. That is hardly an adequate conception, being derived from the sense of sight only; the ear has something to say in the matter, and there is much in a name. Before my studies of his character had effaced my childish impression I used always to picture him in the act of bending over a tub.

There are two George Washingtons—the natural and the artificial. They are now equally "great," but the former was chokefull of the old Adam. He swore like "our army in Flanders," loved a bottle like a brother and had an inter-colonial reputation as a lady-killer. He was, indeed, a singularly interesting and magnetic old boy—one whom any sane and honest lover of the picturesque in life and character would deem it an honor and an education to have known in the flesh. He is now known to but few; you must dig pretty deeply into the tumulus of rubbishy panegyric—scan pretty closely the inedited annals of his time, in order to see him as he was. Criss-crossed upon these failing parchments of the past are the lines of the sleek

Philistine, the smug patriot and the lessoning moraler, making a palimpsest whereof all that is legible is false and all that is honest is blotted out. The detestable anthropolater of the biographical gift has pushed his glowing pen across the page, to the unspeakable darkening of counsel. In short, Washington's countrymen see him through a glass dirtily. The image is unlovely and unloved. You can no more love and revere the memory of the biographical George Washington than you can an isosceles triangle or a cubic foot of interstellar space.

The portrait-painters began it—Gilbert Stuart and the rest of them. They idealized all the humanity out of the poor patriot's face and passed him down to the engravers as a rather sleepy-looking butcher's block. There is not a portrait of Washington extant which a man of taste and knowledge would suffer to hang on the wall of his stable. Then the historians jumped in, raping all the laurels from the brows of the man's great contemporaries and piling them in confusion upon his pate. They made him a god in wisdom, and a giant in arms; whereas, in point of ability and service, he was but little, if at all, superior to any one of a half-dozen of his now over-shadowed

but once illustrious co-workers in council and camp, and in no way comparable with Hamilton. He towers above his fellows because he stands upon a pile of books.

The supreme indignity to the memory of this really worthy man has been performed by the Sunday-scholiasts, the pietaries, the truly good, the example-to-American-youth folk. These canting creatures have managed to nake him of his last remaining rag of flesh and drain out his ultimate red corpuscle of human blood. In order that he may be acceptable to themselves they have made him a bore to everyone else. To give him value as an "example" to the unripe intelligences of their following they have whitewashed him an inch thick, draped him, fig-leafed him and gilded him out of all semblance to man. To prepare his character for the juvenile moral tooth they have boned it, and to make it digestible to the juvenile moral paunch, unsalted it by maceration in the milk-and-water of their own minds. And so we have him today. In a single century the great-hearted gentleman of history has become the good boy of literature—the public prig. Washington is the capon of our barnyard Pantheon—revised and edited for the table.

JOHN SMITH'S ANCESTORS

READER mine, wisest of mortals that you are, do you feel sure that you know how to deal with a proposition, which is at the same time unquestionable and impossible—which must be true, yet can not be true? Do you know just what degree of intellectual hospitality to give to such a proposition—whether to receive and entertain it (and if so how) or cast it from you, and how to do that? Possibly you were never consciously at bay before a proposition of that kind, and therefore lack the advantage of skill in its disposal. Attend, then, O child of mortality—consider and be wise:

You have, or have had, two parents—whom God prosper if they live and rest if dead. Each of them had two parents; in other words, you had at some time and somewhere four grandparents, and right worthy persons they were, I'll be sworn, albeit you may not be able to name them without stopping to take thought. Of great-grandparents you surely had no fewer than eight—that is to say,

no further away than three generations your ancestors numbered eight persons, now in heaven. In countries which are pleased to call themselves civilized and enlightened "a generation" means about thirty-four years. Not long ago it meant thirty-three, but improved methods of distribution, sanitation and so forth have added a year to the average duration of human life, though they have not pointed out any profitable use to make of the addition. All this amounts to saying (acceptably, I trust) that at each remove of thirty-four years back toward Adam and his time you double the number of your ancestors. Among so many some, naturally, were truly modest persons, and I don't know that you would care to have so much said about them as I shall have to say; so, if you please, we will speak of Mr. John Smith's instead.

John Smith, then, whom I know very well, and greatly esteem, and who is approaching middle age, had, about 34 years ago, two ancestors. About 102 years ago, say in the year of grace 1792, he had eight—though he did not have himself. You can do the rest of the figuring yourself if you care to go on and are unwilling to take my word for what follows —the astonishing state of things which I am

about to thrust upon your attention. Just keep doubling the number of John Smith's ancestors until you get the number 1,073,741,-824. Now when do you suppose it was that Mr. Smith had that number of living ancestors? Make your calculation, allowing 34 years for each time that you have multiplied by two, and you will find that it was about the year 879. It seems a rather modern date and a goodish number of persons to be concerning themselves, however unconsciously, in the begetting of Neighbor John, but that is not "where it hurts." The point is that the number of his ancestors, so far as we have gone, is about the number of the earth's inhabitants at that date—little and big; white, black, brown, yellow and blue; males, females and girls. I do not care to point out Mr. Smith's presumption in professing himself an Anglo-Saxon—with all that mixed blood in the veins of him; perhaps he has never made this calculation and does not know from just what stock he has the honor to have descended, though truly this distinguished scion of an illustrious race might seem to be justified in calling himself a Son of Earth.

But is he not more than that? In the generation immediately preceding the one under

consideration the number of the gentleman's ancestors must have been twice as great, namely, 2,147,483,648—more than two thousand millions, or some five hundred millions more than Earth is infested with even now. Where did all those people live?—in Mars? And to what political or other causes was due the migration to Earth, *en masse,* of their sons and daughters in the next generation?

Does the reader care to follow up Mr. Smith's long illustrious line any further—back to the wee, sma' years of the Christian era, for example? Well and good, but I warn him that geometrical progression, as he has already observed, "counts up." Long before his calculations have reached back to the first merry Christmas he will find Mr. Smith's ancestors—if they were really all terrestrial in their habits—piled many-deep over the entire surface of all the continents, islands and ice-floes of this distracted globe. A decent respect for the religious convictions of my countrymen forbids me even to hint at what the calculation would show if carried back to the time of Adam and Eve.

It will perhaps be observed that I have left out of consideration the circumstance that John Smith (my particular John) is not the

sole living inhabitant of Earth to-day: there are others, though mostly of the same name, whose ancestors would somewhat swell the totals. In mercy to the reader I have ignored them, one man being sufficient for my purpose.

Must not John Smith have had all those ancestors? Certainly. Could all those ancestors of John Smith have existed? Certainly not. Have I not, therefore, as I promised to do, conducted the reader against "a proposition which is at the same time unquestionable and impossible"—a statement "which must be true, yet can not be true"? According to the best of my belief he is there. And there I leave him. Any gentleman not content to remain there with his face to the wall is at liberty to go over it or through it if he can. Doubtless the world will be delighted to hear him expose the fallacy of my reasoning and the falsehood of my figures. And I shall be pleased myself.

1894.

THE MOON IN LETTERS

FOR some months my friends had been benumbing the membranes of my two ears with praises of the then newest literary pet, who exulted in a name disagreeably suggestive of Death on a Pale Horse, Mr. H. Rider Haggard, and I meekly assented to his greatness. They had insisted that I read him, but this monstrous demand I had hitherto had the strength to resist. But we all have our moments of weakness, so I squandered twenty-five cents on the "Seaside" edition of the great man's greatest work, *King Solomon's Mines*. On page 84 I found something that interested me, something astronomical, showing how keenly the famous author observes the commonest phenomena of nature. Turning down a leaf and bearing the matter in mind, I read on. At page 97 I turned down another leaf, and at page 112 a third. On these three pages are related astronomical events occurring in Africa on the evening of June 2, the evening of

June 3, and at about midday June 4, respectively. Let us summarize them by quotation: June 2 (p. 84): "The sun sunk and the world was wreathed in shadows. But not for long, for see, in the east there is a glow, then a bent edge of silver light, and at last the full bow of the crescent moon peeps above the plain."

June 3 (p. 97): "About 10 the full moon came up in splendor."

June 4 (p. 112): "I glanced up at the sun and to my intense joy saw that we had made no mistake. On the edge of its brilliant surface was a faint rim of shadow." Which grows to a total eclipse.

What else ensues I am unable to say. A writer who believes that the new moon can rise in the east soon after sunset and the full moon at 10 o'clock; who thinks the second of these remarkable phenomena can occur twenty-four hours after the first, and itself be followed some fourteen hours later by an eclipse of the sun—such a man may be a gifted writer, but I am not a gifted reader. I wash my mind of him, and sentence him to the good opinion of his admirers.

Another sinner on my list of authors ignorant in respect of the moon's movements and

phases is William Black. In the third chapter of his *Princess of Thule* is the following sentence: "Was Sheila about to sing in this clear strange twilight while they sat there and watched the yellow moon come up behind the Southern hills?" The spectacle of the moon rising in the south is one which Heaven has denied to all except the characters in Black's novels. It is not surprising that Sheila "was about to sing": she must have felt something of the exultation which swells the bosom of that favored child of Destiny, the small boy who has crept in under the canvas when the menagerie people are painting the tiger.

It may be borne in mind that Black's south-rising moon came up during the twilight—that is to say, shortly after sunset. It would be, therefore, nearly "half-full" to the eye of the terrestrial observer; but referring to a later hour of the same evening Black says: "There into the beautiful dome rose the golden *crescent* of the moon, warm in color as though it still retained the last rays of the sunset." Concerning the last clause of this astonishing sentence it may be asked from what source Black supposed the moon's light to be derived, or if he regarded her as self-luminous. The truth probably is that he had

no definite ideas about the matter at all. He was in the same comfortable mental state as the worthy countryman who, being asked what he thought of total depravity, promptly replied that if it was in the Bible he was in favor of it.

In dismissing Black I can not forbear to add that even if the moon could rise in the south; even if rising in the south it should continue rising into the dome when it should be setting; even if rising in the south soon after sunset a half-moon, as it would necessarily be, and continuing to rise into the dome when it should be setting, it could dwindle to a crescent, it could not be of a warm color. The crescent moon is as cold in color as a new dime—almost as cold as a quarter-dollar. In a bench-show of astronomers I doubt if Black would have been awarded a blue ribbon.

I have been reading a story by Mr. Edgar Saltus: "A Maid of Athens"—a story which, like a forgotten candle, burns on well enough to the end and then dies in its own grease. But that is not the point; I find this passage:

"Beneath descending night, the sky was gold-barred and green. In the east the moon glittered like a sickle of tin."

I shall have to add Mr. Saltus to my com-

pany of authors with private systems of astronomy. The imagination robust enough to conceive a crescent moon in the east at nightfall might even claim a place in a dime museum.

Spielhagan has his full moon on the horizon at midnight by the castle clock.

But the novelists are not alone in their ignorance of what is before their eyes all their blessed lives: the poets know no more than they. In her *Songs of the Night-Watches* Jean Ingelow compels "a slender moon" to "float up from behind" a person looking at the sunset sky, and afterward makes the full moon "behind some ruined roof swim up" at daybreak. To rout out the moon so early and make it get up, when it must have been up all night attending to its duty as a full moon of orderly habits, is a trifle heartless. In "Daylight and Moonlight," Longfellow, who seems imperfectly to have known how the latter was produced, tells of a time when at midday he saw the moon

> Sailing high, but faint and white
> As a schoolboy's paper kite.

Now if it was sailing high at noon it must

have been, as seen from earth, nearly on a line with the sun—that is to say, but little more than "new"—that is to say, invisible in the daytime. But that is not the worst of this business. A new moon is not only invisible at noon, but sets soon after sunset, and would give but little light if it did not. Yet this unearthly observer after relating how night came on adds:

> Then the moon, in all her pride,
> Like a spirit glorified,
> Filled and overflowed the night
> With revelations of her light.

It is mournful to think that this popular poet lived out his long serene life without anybody suspecting his condition, nor offering him the comforts of an asylum.

I have found similar blunders in the poems of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Schiller, Moore, Shelley, Tennyson and Bayard Taylor. Of course a poet is entitled to any kind of universe that may best suit his purpose, and if he could give us better poetry by making the moon rise "full-orbed" in the northwest and set like a "tin sickle" in the zenith I should go in for letting him have his fling. But I

do not discern any gain in "sweetness and light" from these despotic readjustments of the relations among sun, earth and moon, and must set it all down to the account of ignorance, which, in any degree and however excusable, is not a thing to be admired. Concerning nothing is it more general, more deep, more dark, more invincible, nor withal, more needless, than it is with regard to movements and visible aspects of our satellite. How one can have eyes and not know the pranks of the several heavenly bodies is possibly obvious to Omniscience, but a finite mind cannot rightly understand it.

We will suppose that our planet is without a satellite. The nights are brilliant or starless, as the clouds may determine, but in all the measureless reaches of space is no world having a visible disk, with vicissitudes of light and shadow. One day a famous man of science announces in the public prints a startling discovery. He has found an orb, smaller than the earth but of considerable magnitude, moving in such a direction and at such a rate of speed that at a stated time the next year it will have approached our sphere so closely as to be caught by its attractive power and held, a prisoner, wheeling round and round

in a vain endeavor to escape. He goes on to explain that the invisible tether will be, astronomically speaking, but a stone's throw in length: the captive world will have in fact the astonishing propinquity of only a quarter of a million miles! We shall be able to see, even with unassisted eyes, the very mountains and valleys upon its surface, while a glass of moderate power will show, not only these mountains (many times higher than those of our own orb) with perfect definition, their long black shadows projected upon the plains, but will reveal the details of extinct craters wide enough to engulf a terrestrial province, and how deep Heaven knows. Upon this strange new world, the great man goes on to say, we shall be able to observe the mutations of its day and night, tracing the lines of its dawn and sunset exactly as, if we were there, we could observe the more rapid changes upon the body of our own planet; and surely it would be worth something to stand away from our spinning orb and take in all its visible vicissitudes in one comprehensive view.

It is easy to see the effect of such an announcement, verified by the apparition of the orb at the calculated place and time. All the civilized nations would be in a ferment. The

newspapers would be full of the subject. Journalism would be conducted by the astronomers and nothing but the coming orb would be talked of; many would go mad from excitement. And when the celestial monster, moving aimless through space, should swim into the earth's attraction and go whirling in its new orbit how we should study it, attentive to its every visible aspect, alertly sensible to its changes and profoundly moved by the desolate sublimity of its stupendous scenery. For a half of every lunar month the churches, lyceums, theaters—all the places of instruction or amusement where people now assemble by artificial light would close at sunset and the whole population would take to the hills. Colleges, societies and clubs would be founded for the new knowledge; every human being, with opportunity and capacity, would become a specialist in selenography and selenology—a lunar expert, devoted to his science. Not to know all about the moon would be considered as discreditable as illiteracy is considered now. Well, the moon we have always with us, and not one man in a thousand nor one author in a hundred knows any more about it than that it is frequently invisible and commonly not round. On other subjects

there is less ignorance: at least three in a thousand know that the stars are not the same as the planets, though two of the three are unable to say what is a planet and what is a star.

That immortal ass, "the average man," sees with nothing but his eyes. To him a planet or a star is only a point of light—a bright dot, a golden fly-speck on "the sky." He does not see it as a prodigious globe swimming through the unthinkable depths of space. With only the heavens for company the poor devil is bored. When out alone on a clear night he wants to get himself home to his female and young and—unfailing expedient of intellectual vacuity—go to bed. The glories and splendors of the firmament are no more to him than a primrose was to Peter Bell. Let us leave him snoring pigly in his blankets and turn to other themes, not forgetting that he is our lawful ruler, nor permitted to forget the insupportable effects of his ferocious rule.

1903.

COLUMBUS

THE human mind is affected with a singular disability to get a sense of an historical event without a gigantic figure in the foreground overtopping all his fellows. As surely as God liveth, if one hundred congenital idiots were set adrift in a scow to get rid of them, and, borne by favoring currents into eyeshot of an unknown continent, should simultaneously shout, "Land ho!" instantly drowning in their own drool, we should have one of them figuring in history ever thereafter with a growing glory as an illustrious discoverer of his time. I do not say that Columbus was a navigator and discoverer of that kind, nor that he did anything of that kind in that way; the parallel is perfect only in what history has done to Columbus; and some seventy millions of Americans are authenticating the imposture all they know how. In this whole black business hardly one element of falsehood is lacking.

Columbus was not a learned man, but an

ignorant. He was not an honorable man, but a professional pirate. He was, in the most hateful sense of the word, an adventurer. His voyage was undertaken with a view solely to his own advantage, the gratification of an incredible avarice. In the lust of gold he committed deeds of cruelty, treachery and oppression for which no fitting names are found in the vocabulary of any modern tongue. To the harmless and hospitable peoples among whom he came he was a terror and a curse. He tortured them, he murdered them, he sent them over the sea as slaves. So monstrous were his crimes, so conscienceless his ambition, so insatiable his greed, so black his treachery to his sovereign, that in his mere imprisonment and disgrace we have a notable instance of "the miscarriage of justice." In the black abysm of this man's character we may pile falsehood upon falsehood, but we shall never build the monument high enough to top the shadow of his shame. Upon the culm and crown of that reverend pile every angel will still look down and weep.

We are told that Columbus was no worse than the men of his race and generation—that his vices were "those of his time." No vices are peculiar to any time; this world has been

vicious from the dawn of history, and every race has reeked with sin. To say of a man that he is like his contemporaries is to say that he is a scoundrel without excuse. The virtues are accessible to all. Athens was vicious, yet Socrates was virtuous. Rome was corrupt, but Marcus Aurelius was not corrupt. To offset Nero the gods gave Seneca. When literary France groveled at the feet of the third Napoleon Hugo stood erect.

It will be a dark day for the world when infractions of the moral law by A and B are accepted as justification of the sins of C. But even in the days of Columbus men were not all pirates; God inspired enough of them to be merchants to serve as prey for the others; and while turning his honest penny by plundering them, the great Christopher was worsted by a Venetian trading galley and had to pickle his pelt in a six-mile swim to the Portuguese coast, a wiser and a wetter thief. If he had had the hard luck to drown we might none of us have been Americans, but the gods would have missed the revolting spectacle of an entire people prostrate before the blood-beslubbered image of a moral idiot, performing solemn rites of adoration with a litany of lies.

In comparison with the crimes of Columbus his follies cut a sorry figure. Yet the foolhardy enterprise to whose failure he owes his fame is entitled to distinction. With sense enough to understand the earth's spheroid form (he thought it pear-shaped) but without knowledge of its size, he believed that he could reach India by sailing westward and died in the delusion that he had done so—a trifling miscalculation—a matter of eight or ten thousands of miles. If this continent had not happened to lie right across his way he and his merry men would all have gone fishing, with themselves for bait and the devil a hook among them. Firmness is persistence in the right; obstinacy is persistence in the wrong. With the light that he had, Columbus was so wildly, dismally and fantastically wrong that his refusal to turn back was nothing less than pig-headed unreason, and his crews would have been abundantly justified in deposing him. The wisdom of an act is not to be determined by the outcome, but by the performer's reasonable expectation of success. And after all, the expedition failed lamentably. It accomplished no part of its purpose, but by a happy chance it accomplished something better—for us. As to the

red Indians, such of them as have been good enough to assist in apotheosis of the man whom their ancestors had the deep misfortune to discover may justly boast themselves the most magnanimous of mammals.

And when all is conceded there remains the affronting falsehood that Columbus discovered America. Surely in all these drunken orgies of beatification—in all this carnival of lies there should be found some small place for Lief Ericsson and his wholesome Northmen, who discovered, colonized and abandoned this continent five hundred years before, and of whom we are forbidden to think as corsairs and slave-catchers. The eulogist is always a calumniator. The crown that he sets upon the unworthy head he first tears from the head that is worthy. So the honest fame of Lief Ericsson is cast as rubbish to the void, and the Genoese pirate is pedestaled in his place.

But falsehood and ingratitude are sins against Nature, and Nature is not to be trifled with. Already we feel, or ought to feel, the smart of her lash. Our follies are finding us out. Our Columbian Exhibition has for its chief exhibit our national stupidity, and displays our shame. Our Congress "improves

the occasion" to make a disgraceful surrender to the Chadbands and Stigginses of churches by a bitter observance of the Sabbath. Managers of the show steal the first one thousand dollars that come into their hands by bestowing them upon a schoolgirl related to one of themselves, for a "Commemoration Ode" as long as the language and as foolish as its grammar—the ragged, tagless and bobtailed yellow dog of commemoration odes. And *this* while Whittier lived to suffer the insult, and Holmes to resent it. What further exhibits of our national stupidity and lack of moral sense space has been engaged for in the world's contempt one can only conjecture. In the meantime state appropriations are being looted, art is in process of caricature, literature is debauched, and we have a Columbian Bureau of Investigation and Suppression with a daily mail as voluminous as that of a commercial city. If at the finish of this revealing revelry self-respecting Americans shall not have lost through excessive use the power to blush, and all Europe the ability to laugh, another Darwin should write another book on the expression of the emotions in men and animals.

That nothing might be lacking to the ab-

surdity of the scheme, the falsehood marking all the methods of its execution, we must needs avail ourselves of an alteration in the calendar and have two anniversary celebrations of one event. And in culmination of this comedy of falsehood, the later date must formally open, with dedicatory rites, an exhibition which will not be open for six months. One falsehood begets another and another in the line of succession, until the father of them all shall have colonized his whole progeny upon the congenial soil of this new Dark Continent.

Why should not the four-hundredth anniversary of the rediscovery of America have been made memorable by fitly celebrating it with a becoming sense of the stupendous importance of the event, without thrusting into the forefront of the rites the dismal personality of the very small man who made the find? Could not the most prosperous and vain people of the earth see anything to celebrate in the four centuries between San Salvador and Chicago but it must sophisticate history by picking that offensive creature out of his shame to make him a central, dominating figure of the festival? Thank Heaven, there is one thing that all the genius of the anthropolaters can not do. Quarrel as we

may about the relative claims to authenticity of portraits painted from description, we can not perpetuate the rogue's visible appearance "in his habit as he lived." Audible to the ear of the understanding fall with unceasing iteration from the lips of his every statue in every land the words, "I am a lie!"

1892.

THE RELIGION OF THE TABLE

WHEN the starving peasantry of France were bearing with inimitable fortitude their great bereavement in the death of Louis le Grand, how cheerfully they must have bowed their necks to the easy yoke of Philip of Orleans, who set them an example in eating which he had not the slightest objection to their following. A monarch skilled in the mysteries of the cuisine must wield the scepter all the more gently for his schooling in handling the ladle. In royalty, the delicate manipulation of an omelette soufflé is at once an evidence of genius, and an assurance of a tender forbearance in state policy. All good rulers have been good livers, and if most bad ones have been the same this merely proves that even the worst of men have still something divine in them.

There is more in a good dinner than is disclosed by removal of the covers. Where the eye of hunger perceives only a juicy roast that of faith detects a smoking god. A well cooked joint is redolent of religion, and a

delicate pasty crisp with charity. The man who can light his after-dinner Havana without feeling full to the neck with all the cardinal virtues is either steeped in iniquity or has dined badly. In either case he is no true man. It is here held that it is morally impossible for a man to dine daily upon the fat of the land in courses and yet deny a future state of existence beatific with beef and ecstatic with all edibles. A falsity of history is that of Heliogabalus dining on nightingales' tongues. No true gourmet would ever send a nightingale to the shambles so long as scarcer, and therefore, better songsters might be obtained.

It is a fine natural instinct that teaches the hungry and cadaverous to avoid the temples of religion, and a shortsighted and misdirected zeal that would gather them into it. Religion is for the oleaginous, the fat-bellied, chyle-saturated devotees of the table. Unless the stomach be lined with good things, the parson may say as many as he can and his truths shall not be swallowed nor his wisdom inly digested. Probably the highest, ripest, and most acceptable form of worship is performed with a knife and fork; and whosoever on the resurrection morning can produce from

amongst the lumber of his cast-off flesh a thin-coated and elastic stomach showing evidences of daily stretchings done in the body will find it his readiest passport and best credential. Surely God will not hold him guiltless who eats with his knife, but if the deadly steel be always well laden with toothsome morsels divine justice will be tempered with mercy to that man's soul. When the author of *The Lost Tales of Miletus* represented Sisyphus as capturing his guest, the King of Terrors, and stuffing the old glutton with meat and drink until he became " a jolly, rubicund, tun-bellied Death," he gave us a tale that needs no *"hæc fabula docet"* to point out the moral.

I verily believe that Shakspeare writ down Fat Jack at his last gasp, as babbling, not o' green fields, but o' green turtle, and that starveling, Colley Cibber, altered the text from sheer envy of a good man's death. To die well we must live well, is a familiar platitude. Morality is, of course, best promoted by the good quality of our fare, but quantitative excellence is by no means to be despised. *Cæteris paribus,* the man who eats much is a better Christian than the man who eats little; and he who eats little will live more godly than he who eats nothing.

REVISION DOWNWARD

THE big man's belief in himself is not surprising, and in respect of a trial of muscular strength it is well founded, but the preference of all nations, their parliaments and people, for tall soldiers is a "survival," an inherited faith held without examination. Men in battle no longer come into actual personal contact with their enemies in such a way that superior weight and strength are advantageous; and superior size is a disadvantage, for it means a larger mark for bullets.

In our civil war the big men were soonest invalided and sent home. They soonest gave in to the fatigues of campaign and charge. The little fellows, more "wiry" and enduring were the better material. I am compelled to affirm this from personal observation, knowing no other authority, though for so obvious a fact other authority must exist. Incidentally, I may explain that I am nearly six feet long.

What is true of men is true of horses. Strength, which implies size, is necessary in the horse militant, particularly in the artillery; but it is got at the expense of agility and endurance. The "toughest" American horse is the little Western "cayuse," the "Indian pony" of our early literature.

This matter of so-called "degeneration" in the stature of men and animals has a more than military interest. It is not without meaning that all peoples have traditions of giants, and that all literatures are full of references to a remote ancestry of superior size and strength. Even Homer tells of his heroes before the walls of Troy hurling at one another such stones as ten strong men of his degenerate day could not have lifted from the earth.

The kernel of truth in all this is that the human race is actually decreasing in size. But this is not "degeneration." It is improvement. Where are the megatherium, the dinosaurus, the mammoth and the mastodon? Where is the pterodactyl? What has happened to the moa and the other gigantic bird whose name I do not at this moment recall—maybe the epiornis? Condemned and executed by Nature for unfitness in the struggle

for existence. The elephant, the hippopotamus and the rhinoceros are traveling the same road to extinction, and the late American bison could show them the way.

What is the disadvantage of bulk in animals? Feebleness. For an animal twice as heavy as another of the same species to have the same activity it would have to be not twice as strong, but four times as strong; and for some reason to this deponent unknown, Nature does not make it so. If four times as large, it would need to be sixteen times as strong.

Observe the large birds; the little ones, the swallows and "hummers," can fly circles around them. The biggest of them can not fly at all and their wings, from disuse, are vestigial. Many insects can fly, not only proportionately faster and farther than even the humming-bird, but actually. Is there, possibly, a lesson in this for the ingenious gentlemen who expect the freight and passenger business of the future to be done in the air?

We are all familiar with the fact that if a man were as strong and agile in proportion as a flea he could leap several miles; one can figure out the exact number for oneself. If as strong as an ant he could shoulder and lug

away a six-inch rifle and its carriage. Doubtless in the course of evolution (if evolution is permanent) man (if man is spared) will have the ant's strength—and the ant's size.

Considering the advantages that the smaller insects and animalculæ have in the struggle for existence and the wonderful powers and capacities it must have developed in them—which we know, indeed, from such observers as Sir John Lubbock it actually has developed in the ant—I can see no reason to doubt that some of them have attained a high degree of civilization and enlightenment.

To this view it may be said in objection that we, not they, are masters of the world. That has nothing to do with it; to insect civilization dominion may not be at all desirable. But are we masters? Wait till we have subdued the red flea and the house-fly; then, as we lay off our armor, we may more becomingly boast.

1903.

THE ART OF CONTROVERSY

I

ONE who has not lived a life of controversy, yet has some knowledge of its laws and methods, would, I think, find a difficulty in conceiving the infantile ignorance of the race in general as to what constitutes argument, evidence and proof. Even lawyers and judges, whose profession it is to consider evidence, to sift it and pass upon it, are but little wiser in that way than others when the matter in hand is philosophy, or religion, or something outside the written law. Concerning these high themes, I have heard from the lips of hoary benchers so idiotic argument based on so meaningless evidence as made me shudder at the thought of being tried before them on an indictment charging me with having swallowed a neighbor's step-ladder. Yet doubtless in a matter of mere law these venerable babes would deliver judgment that would be roughly reasonable and approximately right. The theo-

logian, on the contrary, is never so irrational as in his own trade; for, whatever religion may be, theology is a thing of unreason altogether, an edifice of assumptions and dreams, a superstructure without a substructure, an invention of the devil. It is to religion what law is to justice, what etiquette is to courtesy, astrology to astronomy, alchemy to chemistry and medicine to hygiene. The theologian can not reason, for persons who can reason do not go in for theology. Its name refutes it: theology means discourse of God, concerning whom some of its expounders say that he has no existence and all the others that he can not be known.

I set out to show the folly of men who think they think—to give a few typical examples of what they are pleased to call "evidence" supporting their views. I shall take them from the work of a man of far more than the average intelligence dealing with the doctrine of immortality. He is a believer and thinks it possible that immortal human souls are on an endless journey from star to star, inhabiting them in turn. And he "proves" it thus:

"No one thinks of space without knowing that it can be traversed; consequently the con-

ception of space implies the ability to traverse it."

But how far? He could as cogently say: "No one thinks of the ocean without knowing that it can be swum in; consequently the conception of ocean implies the ability to swim from New York to Liverpool." Here is another precious bit of testimony:

"The fact that man can conceive the idea of space without beginning or end implies that man is on a journey without beginning or end. In fact, it is strong evidence of the immortality of man."

Good—now observe the possibilities in that kind of "reasoning": The fact that a pig can conceive the idea of a turnip implies that the pig is climbing a tree bearing turnips—which is strong evidence that the pig is a fish. In each of the gentleman's *dicta* the first part no more "implies" what follows than it implies a weeping baboon on a crimson iceberg.

Of the same unearthly sort are two more of this innocent's deliveries:

"The fact that we do not remember our former lives is no proof of our never having existed. We would remember them if we had accomplished something worth remembering."

Note the unconscious *petitio principii* involved in the first "our" and the pure assumption in the second sentence.

"We all know that character, traits and habits are as distinct in young children as in adults. This shows that if we had no pre-existence all men would have the same character and traits and appearance, and would be turned out on the same model."

As apples are, for example, or pebbles, or cats. Unfortunately we do not "all" know, nor does any of us know, nor is it true, that young children have as much individuality as adults. And if we did all know it, or if any of us knew it, or if it were true, neither the fact itself nor the knowledge of it would "show" any such thing as that the differences could be produced by pre-existence only. They might be due to the will of God, or to some agency that no man has ever thought about, or has thought about but has not known to have that effect. In point of fact, we know that such peculiarities of character and disposition as a young child has are not brought from a former life across a gulf whose brinks are death and birth, but are endowments from the lives of others here. They are not indi-

vidual, but hereditary—not vestigial, but ancestral.

The kind of "argument" here illustrated by horrible example is not peculiar to religious nor doctrinal themes, but characterizes men's reasoning in general. It is the rule everywhere—in oral discussion, in books, in newspapers. Assertions that mean nothing, testimony that is not evidence, facts having no relation to the matter in hand, and (everywhere and always) the sickening *non sequitur*: the conclusion that has nothing to do with the premises. I know not if there is another life, but if there is I do hope that to obtain it all will have to pass a rigid examination in logic and the art of not being a fool.

II

In an unfriendly controversy it is important to remember that the public, in most cases, neither cares for the outcome of the fray, nor will remember its incidents. The controversialist should therefore confine his efforts and powers to accomplishment of two main purposes: 1—entertainment of the reader: 2—personal gratification. For the first of these objects no rules can be given; the good writer

will entertain and the bad one will not, no matter what is the subject. The second is accomplishable (a) by guarding your self-respect; (b) by destroying your adversary's self-respect; (c) by making him respect you, against his will, as much as you respect yourself; (d) by provoking him into the blunder of permitting you to despise him. It follows that any falsification, prevarication, dodging, misrepresentation or other cheating on the part of one antagonist is a distinct advantage to the other, and by him devoutly to be wished. The public cares nothing for it, and if deceived will forget the deception; but *he* never forgets. I would no more willingly let my opponent find a flaw in my truth, honesty and frankness than in fencing I would let him beat down my guard. Of that part of victory which consists in respecting yourself and making your adversary respect you you can be always sure if you are worthy of respect; of that part which consists in despising him and making him despise himself you are not sure; that depends on his skill. He may be a very despicable person yet so cunning of fence—that is to say, so frank and honest in writing—that you will not find out his unworth. Remember that what you want is not so much to

disclose his meanness to the reader (who cares nothing about it) as to make him disclose it to your private discernment. That is the whole gospel of controversial strategy.

You are one of two gladiators in the arena: your first duty is to amuse the multitude. But as the multitude is not going to remember very long after leaving the show who was victorious, it is not worth while to take any hurts for a merely visible advantage. So fight as to prove to yourself and to your adversary that you are the abler swordsman—that is, the more honorable man. Victory in that is important, for it is lasting, and is enjoyed ever afterward when you see or think of the vanquished. If in the battle I get a foul stroke, that is a distinct gain, for I never by any possibility forget that the man who delivered it is a foul man. That is what I wanted to think him, and the very thing which he should most strenuously have striven to prevent my knowing. I may meet him in the street, at the club, any place where I can not help it; under whatever circumstances he becomes present to my consciousness I find a fresh delight in recalling my moral superiority and in despising him anew. Is it not strange, then, that ninety-nine disputants in a

hundred deliberately and in cold blood concede to their antagonists this supreme and decisive advantage in pursuit of one which is merely illusory? Their faults are, first, of course, lack of character; second, lack of sense. They are like an enraged mob engaged in hostilities without having taken the trouble to know something of the art of war. Happily for them, if they are defeated they do not know it: they have not even the sense to ascribe their sufferings to their wounds.

1899.

IN THE INFANCY OF "TRUSTS"

THE battle against the "trusts" is conspicuously "on." I venture to predict that it will fail, and to think that it ought to fail. That it ought to fail is, in this bad world, no good reason for thinking that it will; there is a strong numerical presumption the other way. For doubting the success of this "movement" there are reasons having nothing to do with the righteousness or unrighteousness of the cause. One is that the entire trend of our modern civilization is toward combination and aggregation. In the "concert of the great powers" of Europe we see its most significant, most beneficent and grandest manifestation. Denounce it how we will, fight it as we may, we are powerless to stay its advance in any department of human activity, social, industrial, commercial, military, political. It is the dominant phenomenon of our time. Labor combines into "unions," capital into "trusts," and each aggregation is powerful in every-

thing except in combating its own methods in the other. The newspaper denounces the one or the other—and joins a syndicate of newspapers. "Department stores" spring up all over the land, draw the fire of the demagogue and are impotently condemned in the platform of the political trust that he adorns. Our great hotels are examples of the same centripetal law, and offices move to the center into buildings overlooking the church spires. Small farms are disappearing; railways absorb other railways and by pooling interests with those unabsorbed, evoke impotent legislation and vain "decisions." Cities swallow and digest their suburbs. There are such things as guilds of authors; tramps devastate in organized bodies, and there has been even a congress of religions.

In the larger politics we observe the same tendency to aggregation; everywhere the unit of control is enlarging. In the Western Hemisphere we have had Pan-American congresses and seen the genesis of the Dominion of Canada. The United States have set up, and must henceforth maintain, what is virtually a protectorate of American Republics—a policy which commits us to their defense in every dispute with a European power, gives

us a living interest in all their affairs and makes every square foot of South America in some sense United States territory.

Beyond the Atlantic it is the same. The entire continent of Africa is being parted among a few European nations already swollen to enormous growth by vast accretions of colonial dominion. And all over the world colonial federation is in the air. In Europe itself states are drawn together into kingdoms, kingdoms into empires. United Italy and United Germany are conspicuous and significant examples. Whether in the Other World a movement is afoot to establish Greater Heaven by annexing Hell neither the celestial ambassadors have informed us from the pulpit, nor the infernal from the tribune.

Multiplication of international "conventions" and "treaties" is one of the most striking of contemporary political phenomena. They are a minor species of international federation, attesting and perpetuating a community of interest which statesmen no longer venture to ignore. By some hopeful spirits they are regarded as preliminary committee-work of Tennyson's "Parliament of Man." International arbitration is a blind step in the same direction, profitable chiefly as evidence

of the general trend. The set of the currents of human interests is from all points of the compass toward fewer and fewer nuclei of control. We may dislike the direction—may clamor against the current that seems to be affecting a particular interest, but we can neither stay nor turn it. We may utter (from the pocket) our disrelish of the "trust," the "combine," the "monopoly"; they are phases of the movement and we shall shriek in vain.

A few of the public advantages of combinations in production may be mentioned. Economy is the most obvious. A syndicate or trust requires just as many miners to dig a million tons of coal, for example, as a dozen independent companies did; but it does not require nearly so many salaried officers, nor nearly so many expensive offices. The man who is in danger of "losing his place" is not the laborer, yet it is the laborers who are loudest in their wail. A little reflection will suggest many other ways in which economy of production is served by combination; but deeper reflection, with some knowledge of commercial phenomena, is required to make it clear that economy of production benefits anybody but the producer. It is of some potential advantage, at least, to the consumer

that the producer is able, without bankruptcy, to lower the price of the product if Heaven should put it into his heart to do so.

Stability of employment is promoted by combination of capital. A single concern employing ten thousand workmen will not hold them subject to the whims and caprices of a single mind conscious of its ability to replace them, as is the case with a man employing only a dozen. To a rich corporation carrying on a large business a strike means a great loss; to a score of small concerns it means a comparatively small loss each, and is incurred with a light heart. Labor may be very sure of having its demands attentively considered by those who cannot afford to be a day without it.

A great part of the clamor against trusts is the honest expression of a belief (promoted by many writers on political economy) that in commercial matters the only influence concerned in reduction of price is competition. Nearly all workingmen are more or less discontented with the "competitive system" in industrial affairs, but few have learned to challenge its benignity in trade. Competition is, in fact, only one of the several forces concerned in cheapening commodities and, gen-

erally speaking, not by any means the most considerable. It requires only a brief experience in producing and selling to convince an intelligent man that his prosperity is to be found in the large sales of his product that come of low prices. Having control of his market and a free hand in the management of his business such a man studies to reduce his selling price to the lowest possible point. An enlightened selfishness moves him to undersell himself whenever he can, as if he were his own competitor.

Not all men managing large commercial affairs are intelligent. Some of the trusts are organized and conducted with a view to enhancing rather than reducing prices; but these are bound to fail. By tempting the small concerns to remain in or re-enter the field, the trust cuts its own throat. Its primary purpose is to "crush out" the independent "small dealer," and this it can do in only one way—lure away his customers by underselling him. If consumers really think that is so wicked a thing to do they have the remedy in their own hands. Let them refuse to leave the small dealer, and continue to pay him the higher price. This course would entail a bit of sacrifice, maybe, but it would have the

merit of freedom from cant and hypocrisy. I know of nothing more ludicrous than the spectacle of these solemn consumers appealing to the law and public opinion to avenge upon the trusts the injuries of themselves and the small dealer—they having no injuries to avenge and the small dealer only such as themselves have inflicted by assisting the trusts to pluck him. The trust is condemned when it puts up prices, for that harms the consumer; it is condemned when it puts them down, for that harms the small dealer. In either case, both consumer and small dealer make common cause against the enemy that can harm neither without helping the other. If the history of human folly shows anything more absurd surely the historian must have been Rabelais, "laughing sardonically in his easy chair."

The trusts, it is feared, will become too rich and powerful to be controlled. I do not think so. The reason that some of them already defy the power of the states is that, being so few, they have not until now attracted the serious attention of legislatures. And even now our anti-trust legislation is more concerned with the impossible task of abolition and prevention than with the pract-

icable one of regulation. When we have learned by blundering what we can not do we shall easily enough learn what we can do, and find it quite sufficient. Governmental ownership and governmental control are what we are coming to by leaps and bounds; and with the industries and trade of the country in fewer hands the task of regulating them will be greatly simplified, for it is easier to manage one defendant in a single jurisdiction than many in a hundred.

But, it will be asked, is this to become a nation of employees working for a few hundreds of taskmasters? Not at all. The spirited and provident employee can become his own employer and the employer of others by investing his savings in the stock of a trust. The greater its gains, the greater will be his share of them. The "crushed out" small dealer, too, can recoup himself by becoming a part of what crushed him out. Naturally the tendency of the trusts will be to "work the stock market," to "put up jobs" on the small investors, and so forth. Prevention of that sort of thing is a legitimate purpose for legislation, and promises better results than "drastic" measures to destroy the trusts themselves. To do the latter the laws

would have to be drawn so as to forbid any commercial enterprise requiring more capital than its manager could himself supply. That would be a strange law which should undertake to fix the amount of capital to be combined under one management, or limit the number of persons permitted to supply it; yet nothing less "drastic" will "down the trusts." And that would not, for it would be unconstitutional in every state of the Union. As a contribution to the literature of humor it would be slightly better than an apothegm by Josh Billings, but distinctly inferior to that Northwestern statute making it a felony to conduct a "department store"—every country store being of that felonious character.

It is not, perhaps, too late to explain that in these remarks the word "trust" is used in the popular sense, meaning a large aggregation of capital by combination of several concerns under one management. It is my high privilege to know a better word for it, but in deference to those who do most of the talking on this engaging theme I assent to their kind of English.

1899.

POVERTY, CRIME AND VICE

I

ANDREW CARNEGIE once said in an address to a young men's Bible class:

"The cry goes up to abolish poverty, but it will indeed be a sad day when poverty is no longer with us. Where will your inventor, your artist, your philanthropist, your reformer, in fact, anybody of note, come from then? They all come from the ranks of the poor. God does not call his great men from the ranks of the rich."

That is not altogether true. The notable men do not all come from the ranks of the poor, though Mr. Carnegie does, and that gives him the right to point out the sweet "uses of adversity," as did Shakspeare and many others. The rich supply their quota of men naturally great, but through lack of a sufficiently sharp incentive many of these give us less than the best that is in them. When

God is giving out genius he does not study the assessment rolls.

As to the rest, Mr. Carnegie is quite right. A world without poverty would be a world of incapables. Poverty may be due to one or more of many causes, but in a large, general way it is Nature's punishment for incapacity and improvidence. Paraphrasing the poet, we may say that some are born poor, some achieve poverty, and some have poverty thrust upon them—"by the wicked rich," quoth the demagogue. Dear, delicious, old demagogue!—whatever should we do if all were too rich to support him, and his voice were heard no more in the land?

Frequently a curse to the individual, poverty is a blessing to the race, not only because by effacing the unfit (Heaven rest them!) it aids in the survival of the fit; not only because it is a school of fortitude, industry, perseverance, ingenuity, and many another virtue; but because it directly begets such warm and elevating sentiments as compassion, generosity, self-denial, thoughtfulness for others —in a word, altruism. It does not beget enough of all this, but think what we should be with none of it! If there were no helplessness there would be no helpfulness. That

pity is akin to love is sufficiently familiar to the ear, but how profound a truth it is no one seems to suspect. Why, pity is the sole origin of love. We love our children, not because they are ours, but because they are helpless: they need our tenderness and care, as do our domestic animals and our pets. Man loves woman because she is weak; woman loves man, not because he is strong, but because, for all his strength, he is needy; he needs *her*. Minor affections and good will have a similar origin. Friendship came of mutual protection and assistance. Hospitality is vestigial; primarily it was compassion for the wayfarer, the homeless, the hungry. If among our "rude forefathers" none had needed food and shelter, we should have to-day no "entertaining," no social pleasures of any kind.

Poverty is one kind of helplessness. It is an appeal to "what we have the likest God within the soul." In its relief we are made acquainted with ingratitude. Ingratitude, like spanking, or ridicule, or disappointment in love, hurts without harming. It is a bitter tonic, but wholesome and by habit may, doubtless, become agreeable. This, therefore, is how we demonstrate one of the advantages of poverty: Without poverty there

could be no benevolence; without benevolence, no ingratitude—whereby human nature would lack its supreme credential.

I go further than Mr. Carnegie; not only do I think poverty necessary to progress and civilization, but I am persuaded that crime, too, is indispensable to the moral and material welfare of the race. In the ever needful effort to limit and suppress it; in the immemorial and incessant war between the good and the evil forces of this world; in the constant vigilance necessary to the security of life and property; in the strenuous task of safe-guarding the young, the weak and the unfortunate against the cruelty and rapacity ever alurk and alert to prey upon them—in all these forms of the struggle for our racial existence are generated and developed such higher virtues and capabilities as we have. A country without crime would breed a population without sense. In a few generations of security its people would suffer a great annual mortality by falling over their feet. They would be devoured by their dogs and enslaved by their cows.

Poverty and crime are teachers in Nature's great training school. Does it follow that we should cease to resist them—should encourage

and promote them? Not at all; their best beneficence is found in our struggle to suppress, overcome or evade them. The hope of eventual success is itself a spiritual good of no mean magnitude. Let all the chaplains of our forces encourage and hope and pray for that success; but for my part, if I thought victory imminent or possible, I should run away.

Some Chicago millionaires once set afoot a giant scheme for settling the slum population of our great cities on farms. This was a project foredoomed to failure: one might as well attempt to colonize on the hills the fishes of the sea. The experiment of taking the slum-folk from the slums and making them agriculturists has been tried again and again, always with the best intention, always with the worst result: in a few years all are back again in the congenial slums. Of course it ought not to be that way; these unfortunate persons ought not to have inherited from countless generations of urban ancestors the tastes, feelings and capacities binding them to their mode of life as strongly as the children of prosperity are bound to theirs. The mysterious suasion of their environment ought not to exert its incessant, irresistible pull. The

call of the slum should sound through their very dreams with a less iron authority. If with our superior wisdom we had made this world—you and I—men and women of all degrees would turn their faces ever to the light, and the line of least resistance would lead always upward. Their tastes and their instincts would never war with their interests, and the longer one had remained in bondage to the taskmasters of Egypt the more eagerly one would seek the Promised Land, the more contentedly dwell in it. In the world as we have it matters are differently ordered. The way to help the slumfolk is to improve the slums; not enough to drive them out—there should be no worse places for them to go to; just enough to give them a not altogether intolerable prosperity where they are. Earth has no more hopeless being than a renovated slum-dweller, uncongenially prosperous and inappropriately clean.

II

That there is in this country a deep-seated and growing distrust of the rich by the poor is a truth which every right-headed and right-hearted man is compelled to perceive

and deplore. That many of the rich have thoughtlessly and selfishly done much to provoke it is equally obvious and equally deplorable; but largely, I think, it is due to the pernicious teachings of those of both classes who find a profit in promoting it. For neither the rich nor the poor constitute a brotherhood bound by the ties of a common interest; and on the whole, it is well that they do not, for loyalty in defense is usually associated with loyalty in aggression, and those accustomed to stand together for their rights too frequently think that the best foothold is found upon the rights of those opposing them. Not all the rich are men of prey, but to those who are, no quarry is more alluring than the other rich, not only in the way of direct spoliation in business, but by catching the pennies of the applauding poor through that kind of apostasy that poses as superior virtue.

A great part of the sullen animosity of poverty to wealth is undoubtedly the product of mere envy, one of the black elements of human nature whose strength and activity are commonly underestimated, even by the most discerning observers, which of all modern pessimists, Schopenhauer seems most clearly to have perceived. Hatred of the wealthy by

the poor, of the great by the obscure, of the gifted by the dull, is so admirably disguised by the servility with which it is not inconsistent, so generally concealed through consciousness of its disgraceful character, as to have escaped right appraisement by all but the most penetrating understandings.

In producing this antipathy of class to class many other factors are concerned, among them the notion, carefully fostered by demagogues, that, naturally and without reference to personal worth, the rich man despises the poor man. The fact that most of our rich men were once poor is permitted to cut no figure in the matter; as is the fact that annually in this country more than one hundred million dollars are given away by the rich in merely those benefactions large enough to attract public attention. "Not so very much," says the demagogue, "considering how many of them there are." But when engaged in showing how large a proportion of the country's wealth is owned by how few persons, he sings another song.

The hatred is not mutual; the wealthy do not dislike and despise their less fortunate, less capable, less thrifty, lucky, enterprising or ambitious fellow-men. The element of

envy is not present to feed the rancor. Nor is there any profit in the business of kindling and keeping alight the fires of hostility to the poor; the demagogue has among the rich no professional antagonist practising *his* methods.

True, the wealthy do, as a rule, hold themselves aloof from the poor; even usually from those with whom they associated before their days of prosperity; sometimes from their own less prosperous relatives. There are several reasons; the inexperienced "capitalist" who suspects that none of them is valid can try his luck at making no change in his associations. He will be wiser after a while, but will have fewer friends and less ready money. It will be more economical to learn from some one who has prospered before him—even from a person known to have merely a fair salary and not known to have any dependents.

Doubtless "colossal" fortunes have their disadvantages, chiefly, I think, to those in possession; but as a general proposition, money-making may safely be permitted, for there is no way under the sun to get any good out of money except by parting with it. One may pay it to a tradesman for goods; the tradesman

pays it to another, but eventually it goes to the man that makes the goods, the workman. Or one may lend it on interest, the borrower lending it again at a higher interest, or investing it; it may pass through a dozen hands, but the ultimate man pays it out for labor—the sole purpose and meaning of the entire series of transactions. All the money in the world, except the small part hoarded by misers or lost, is paid out for labor, flows back in converging streams as capital, and is again distributed in wages. Does the socialist know this? He knows nothing; he learned it from Karl Marx and Upton Sinclair. The man who, making money in his own country, spends it in another, may or may not be mischievous to his countrymen; that depends on what he buys. To his race he is harmless and beneficial.

On the whole, the unfortunate rich man, cowering as a prisoner in the dock before the austere tribunal of public opinion, has a pretty good defense if he only knew it. As he seems imperfectly provided with counsel and is not saying much himself, it would be only just for the court to enter a plea of not guilty for him, and to hear a little more testimony than that so abundantly proffered by swift and willing witnesses for the prosecution.

III

Abolition of poverty is not all that our reformers propose—they would abolish all that is disagreeable. Let us suppose them to have accomplished their amiable purposes. We have, then, a country in which are no poverty, no contention, no tyranny or oppression, no peril to life or limb, no disease—and so forth. How delightful! What a good and happy people! Alas, no! With poverty have vanished benevolence, providence, and the foresight which, born of the fear of individual want, stands guard at a thousand gates to defend the general good. The charitable impulse is dead in every breast, and gratitude, atrophied by disuse, has no longer a place among human sentiments and emotions. With no more fighting among ourselves we have lost the power of resentment and resistance: a car-load of Mexicans or a shipful of Japanese can invade our fool's paradise and enslave us, as the Spaniards overran Peru and the British subdued India. (Hailers of "the dawn of the new era" will, I trust, provide that it dawn everywhere at once or here last of all.) Having no oppression to resist and

no suffering to experience, we no longer need the courage to defy, nor the fortitude to endure. Heroism is a failing memory and magnanimity a dream of the past; for not only are the virtues known by contrast with the vices, they spring from the same seed, grow in the same soil, ripen in the same sunshine, and perish in the same frost. A fine race of mollycoddles we should be without our sins and sufferings! In a world without evils there would be one supreme evil—existence.

We need not fear any such condition. Progress is infected with the germs of reversion; on the grave of the civilization of to-day will squat the barbarian of to-morrow, "with a glory in his bosom" that will transfigure him the day after. The alternation is one that we can neither hasten nor retard, for our success baffles us. If, for example, we could abolish war, disease and famine, the race would multiply to the point of "standing room only"—a condition prophesying war, disease and famine. Wherefore the wisest prayer is this: "O Lord, make thy servant strong to fight and impotent to prevail."

1900.

DECADENCE OF THE AMERICAN FOOT

THE ultimate destiny of the American foot is a subject which, through an enlightened selfishness, must more and more engage the interest of the American head and the sympathies of the American heart. Even apart from the question of its final fate and place in the scheme of things, the human foot, American and foreign, has many features of peculiar interest. In the singular complexity of its structure, closely (and as the scientists affirm, significantly) resembling that of the hand, lurk possibilities of controversy sufficient in themselves to tempt attention and invite research. In truth this honorable member's framework may be said to consist mainly of bones of contention. Religion affirms of its arched instep, its flexible toes, its padded sole, and the other peculiarities of its intricate construction an obvious adaptability of means to an end: proof positive of intelligent design, and therefore of an intelligent Designer—

vide Whateley, *passim*. Science coldly replies by pointing to the serviceable foot of the bear, which lacks the arched instep, and of the horse, which is without the flexible toes, or toes of any kind, and in which no use is made of the padded sole. To the simple purposes to which the human foot is applied, says the scientist, its complexity is in no sense nor degree contributory; it would perform all its offices equally well if it were a hoof. All the distinguishing features of the human foot, as contrasted with that, for example, of the horse or sheep, he avers to be such, variously modified by long and regrettable disuse, as fit animals for climbing trees and dwelling in the branches. The human foot is, in short, according to this view of the matter, nothing but an expurgated edition of that of the monkey, and a standing evidence of our descent from that tree-dwelling philosopher.

Into this controversy I do not purpose to enter; I prefer to stand afar off and suggest a compromise, whereby each contentionary may retain, with the other's assent, all that essential part of his belief which is precious to his mind and heart. Let the scientist surrender so much of his theory as is incompatible with the assumption of creative design, the re-

ligionist so much of his faith as traverses the assertion of arboreal activity. The new theory, taking broad enough ground for all to stand upon, may be formulated somewhat as follows: The human foot as we have it was designed by an intelligent Power in order to fit mankind for an arboreal future.

Than this nothing could be fairer. It seems acceptable, and I hope it will be accepted by persons of every shade of religious faith and scientific conviction. It leaves the Christian his Adam, the Darwinian his Ape. Revealed in it, as in a magic crystal, we discern the engaging truth that the hope of Heaven and the belief in a more advanced stage of evolution are virtually the same thing—each in its way a prophecy of another and higher life. That we shall enjoy that superior existence in the flesh is a happiness that is but slightly impaired by the circumstance that it will be in the flesh of Posterity. This is a consideration indeed, that does not at all affect the interest of the evolutionist, for he never has had any expectations; and to the religious person there is a peculiar joy inhering in renunciation of his individual hope for the assurance of a racial advantage. In contemplation of Posterity frolicking

blithely in its leafy and breezy environment, in shoeless nimbleness arboreally gay, every good soul will accept mortality without a pang.

But I have strayed a long way from the question of the ultimate destiny of the American foot. Be it now confessed in all candor that the compromise theory above propounded has a most dubious relevancy to that subject; for in the sylvan high-jinks of the Coming Man the Coming American will probably have no part. While the human foot in general shows no evidence of ever having been employed in its legitimate duty and future function; while Science is not justified in affirming its degeneracy from long disuse in climbing; nothing is more certain than that the American variety of it is doomed to a fatal atrophy from disuse in walking. In cities the multiplication of street-car lines points unmistakably to a time in the near future when there will be one or more in every street, with possibly a moving sidewalk, supplied with upholstered seats, on each side of the way. The universal use of the "elevator" in public and private buildings, including dwellings, will indubitably be followed by that of tubes for shooting the inmates out

of the house and sucking the outmates in. With the general adoption of the traveling carpet, carrying chairs among the several rooms, the last vestigial excuse for the American urban foot will have been effaced, and that member will not lag superfluous on the stage, but in obedience to Nature's mandate step down and out forthwith.

In the rural districts it will doubtless have a longer lease of life, owing partly to the conservative character of the people, the difficulty of hoeing corn while sitting, the saving badness of the roads—inhibiting vehicular "traffic" by all but the hardiest adventurers—and the intricacy of the trails, which forbids the general use of the steam bicycle in driving home the cows.

Eventually these disabilities will be overcome by American ingenuity, and the rural foot having no longer a function in the physical economy, will be absorbed into the character. Its relegation, with that of its urban congenitor, to Nature's waste-dump in the tenebrous realm of things that are no more will mark the dawn of a new era in our life and be followed by radical and profound changes, particularly in the tactical movements of infantry.

THE CLOTHING OF GHOSTS

BELIEF in ghosts and apparitions is general, almost universal; possibly it is shared by the ghosts themselves. We are told that this wide distribution of the faith and its persistence through the ages are powerful evidences of its truth. As to that, I do not remember to have heard the basis of the argument frankly stated; it can be nothing else than that whatever is generally and long believed is true, for of course there can be nothing in the particular belief under consideration making it peculiarly demonstrable by counting noses. The world has more Buddhists than Christians. Is Buddhism therefore the truer religion? Before the day of Galileo there was a general though not quite universal conviction that the earth was a motionless body, the sun passing around it daily. That was a matter in which "the united testimony of mankind" ought to have counted for more than it should in the matter of ghosts, for all can observe the earth and sun, but not many profess to see ghosts,

and no one holds that the circumstances in which they are seen are favorable to calm and critical observation. Ghosts are notoriously addicted to the habit of evasion; Heine says that it is because they are afraid of us. "The united testimony of mankind" has a notable knack at establishing only one thing—the incredibility of the witnesses.

If the ghosts care to prove their existence as objective phenomena they are unfortunate in always discovering themselves to inaccurate observers, to say nothing of the bad luck of frightening them into fits. That the seers of ghosts are inaccurate observers, and therefore incredible witnesses, is clear from their own stories. Who ever heard of a naked ghost? The apparition is always said to present himself (as he certainly should) properly clothed, either "in his habit as he lived" or in the apparel of the grave. Herein the witness must be at fault: whatever power of apparition after dissolution may inhere in mortal flesh and blood, we can hardly be expected to believe that cotton, silk, wool and linen have the same mysterious gift. If textile fabrics had that property they would sometimes manifest it independently, one would think—would "materialize" visibly without

a ghost inside, a greatly simpler apparition than "the grin without the cat."

Ask any proponent of ghosts if he think that the products of the loom can "revisit the glimpses of the moon" after they have duly decayed, or, while still with us, can show themselves in a place where they are not. If he have no suspicion, poor man, of the trap set for him, he will pronounce the thing impossible and absurd, thereby condemning himself out of his own mouth; for assuredly such powers in these material things are necessary to the garmenting of spooks.

Now, by the law *falsus in uno falsus in omnibus* we are compelled to reject all the ghost stories that have ever been seriously told. If the observer (let him be credited with the best intentions) has observed so badly as to think he saw what he did not see, and could not have seen, in one particular, to what credence is he entitled with regard to another? His error in the matter of the "long white robe" or other garment where no long white robe or other garment could be puts him out of court altogether. Resurrection of woolen, linen, silk, fur, lace, feathers, hooks and eyes, buttons, hatpins and the like —well, really, that is going far.

No, we draw the line at clothing. The materialized spook appealing to our senses for recognition of his ghostly character must authenticate himself otherwise than by familiar and remembered habiliments. He must be credentialed by nudity—and that regardless of temperature or who may happen to be present. Nay, it is to be feared that he must eschew his hair, as well as his habiliments, and "swim into our ken" utterly bald; for the scientists tell us with becoming solemnity that hair is a purely vegetable growth and no essential part of us. If he deem these to be hard conditions he is at liberty to remain on his reservation and try to endow us with a terrifying sense of himself by other means.

In brief, the conditions under which the ghost must appear in order to command the faith of an enlightened world are so onerous that he may prefer to remain away—to the unspeakable impoverishment of letters and art.

1902.

SOME ASPECTS OF EDUCATION

WHEN Richard Olney was Secretary of State, "Ouida" (who had nothing to do with the matter) addressed to him a remonstrance against exclusion of illiterate immigrants, explaining that the analphabets in her employ were better servants than those who could read. "I have had for twenty years," she said, "an old man (what is called 'the odd man' in England), and he can be sent with fifty commissions to purchase objects. Detail him orally and he will execute these commissions with no single error." Illiteracy may be a valuable quality in a servant, but we are not taking in immigrants with a view to the betterment of our domestic service; it may qualify a man to do errands, but as a help to him in reading a ballot it does not amount to much. As a claim to high political preferment it is distinctly less valid than a bald head and a knack at gabble.

Nevertheless, "Ouida" was not altogether

wrong. A man is not made intelligent by mere ability to read and write: his little learning is a dangerous thing to himself and to his country. The only reading that such men do is of the most degrading kind: it debases them, mind and heart, gives them a false estimate of their worth, magnifies their woes, and fills them with a sense of their numbers and their power. Eventually they "rise" and have to be shot. Or they succeed, and having first put to death the gifted rascals who incited and led them, they set up a Government of Unreason which they lack the sense to maintain, and their last state is no better than their first. That is the dull, dreary old sequence of events, so familiar to the student of history. That is the beaten path leading back to its beginning, which must be traveled again and again without a break in the monotony of the march. That is Progress—the brute revolt of the ignorant mass, their resubjection by the intelligent few; nowhere justice, nowhere righteousness, everywhere and always force, greed, selfishness and sin. That is the universal struggle—sometimes sluggish, sometimes turbulent, always without an outcome and with no hope of one. Along that hideous path our American free feet are mer-

rily keeping time to the beating of hearts which, swelling to-day with the pride of progress, will shrink to-morrow with the dread of doom.

What then?—is popular education mischievous? Popular education is good for many things; it is not good for the stability of states. Whatever its advantages, it has this disadvantage: it produces "industrial discontent"; and industrial discontent is the first visible symptom of national wreck. Prate as we will of the "dignity of labor," we convince no one that labor is anything other than a hard, imperious necessity, to be avoided if possible. Education promises avoidance—a promise which to the mass of workers is not, and can not be, kept. It brings to Labor a bitter disappointment which in time is transmuted into political mischief. The only man that labors with a song in his heart is he that knows nothing but to labor. Give him education—enlarge by ever so little the scope of his thought—make him permeable to a sense of the pleasures of life and his own privations, and you set up a quarrel between him and his condition. He may remain in his lowly station, but that will be because he cannot get out of it. He may continue to perform his

hard and hateful work, but he will no longer perform it cheerfully and well.

What is the remedy?—educate him still more? Then he will no longer perform it at all—he will die first! Those of us who have tried both may assure him that head-work is harder than hand-work, that it takes more out of one, that its rewards give no greater happiness; he observes that none of us renounces it for the other kind. He does not believe us, and it would not affect him if he did.

What, as a matter of fact, is the public advantage of even that higher education which we tax ourselves more and more to make general? Look at our overcrowded professions, whose "ethics" and practices grow worse and worse from increasing competition. Not one of them is any longer a really "honorable" profession. Look at the monstrous overgrowth of our cities, those congested brains of the nation. They draw to themselves all the output of the colleges and the universities, and as much of that of the country schools as can get a precarious foothold and live—God knows how—in hope to "better its condition." A pretty picture, truly: a population roughly divisible into a conscienceless crowd of brain-workers who have

so "bettered their condition" as to live by prey; a sullen multitude of manual laborers blowing the coals of discontent and plotting a universal overthrow. Above the one perch the primping monkeys of "society," chattering in meaningless glee; below the other the brute tramp welters in his grime. And with it all a national wealth that amazes the world and profits nobody—the country's wonder, pride and curse. Still we go on with a maniacal hope, adding school to school, college to college, university to university, and—unconscious provision for their product—almshouses, asylums and prisons in prodigal abundance.

I am far from affirming that the industrial discontent which for more than a half century has been an augmenting menace to our national life, has its sole origin in popular education conjoined with the higher education of too many. For any social phenomenon there is no lack of causes. For this there are, among others, two of special importance. First, the duplication of the labor force by that female competition which, beginning its displacements pretty well up in the scale, drives the unlucky male to lower and lower levels, until forced out of the lowest by inva-

sion by his own sex from higher ones, he finds no rest for the sole of his foot and takes to the road, an irreclaimable tramp. Second, the amazing multiplication of "labor-saving" machinery, whose disadvantages are swift, and advantages slow—which throws men out of work, who starve while awaiting restitution in the lower price of its products, many of which, even when cheap, are imperfectly edible. So I do not say that the schoolmaster is the only pestilence that walketh at noonday. But I do say—and one with half an eye can observe it for himself and in his own person—that learning in any degree indisposes to manual toil in some degree; that the scholar will not labor musclewise if he can help it, nor with a contented spirit when he can not help it.

In his Founders' Day address at Stanford University, the President of another university said:

> Usually an education will pay, but even when the professions are crowded and he [the college man] can find no place he is still the better for it if he will but accept some lower occupation in life.

But "usually" he will not; he will wedge

himself into some "profession," whether he can make an honest living in it or not. And failing to make an honest living, he will make a living that is not honest. In the service of his belly and his back, he will resort to all manner of shady and unprofessional conduct. His competition forces other weak members of his profession into the same crooked courses, to which the public becomes accustomed and indifferent. What was once unprofessional becomes professional and respectable; with every accession of new men, the standard of allowable conduct falls lower, and to-day the learned professions are little more than organized conspiracies to plunder.

The distinguished author of the address is not without dreams of educational expansion. He says:

> Let the common people flock by hundreds of thousands to the higher institutions of learning; then the whole community will be lifted to a happier level.

As in Germany, where men of university education are as thick as flies and the fields are tilled by women. Then educate the women and the field must be tilled by monkeys. Treading that "happier level" of German

civilization are hundreds of thousands of scholars, becomingly stoop-shouldered and fitly be-spectacled, whom a day's wage of an American farm hand would support in unaccustomed luxury for a week. But not a mother's son of them will perform manual labor if he can help it. Nor will any of the corresponding class here or elsewhere. To educate "the man with a hoe" is to divorce him from his hoe—a prompt and irrevocable separation. A good deal of hoeing is needful in this world, and not so much lawing and physicking and preaching and writing and painting and the rest of it.

If I were dictator I would abolish every "institution of learning" above the grammar schools, excepting one or two universities. I would make a university in fact, as well as in name. It should not only turn out the finest scholars in the world, but it should be a place of original research in a sense that none of our universities now is. From the grammar school to its portal the student should make his upward way unaided—enough would accomplish the feat and thereby prove their fitness; and those who failed would not be greatly harmed by the effort. I am not quite sure if I should limit the number of students

by law; probably that could best be done by the rigor of examinations. Under my dictatorship we would not be a community of "college graduates," mostly men of prey, but neither should we be so top-heavy that in some social convulsion the country would "turn turtle" and stand on its head.

1897.

THE REIGN OF THE RING

THE statement is made on what seems as good authority as in such a matter can be cited that in Europe the custom of wearing finger-rings is "going out"—to "come in" again, doubtless, with renewed vitality. It is hardly to be expected that it will suffer a permanent extinction while human character remains what it is; and the acutest observer can discern no symptoms of change in that. The original impulse moving the gentlemen and ladies of the Stone Age to circumclude their untidy digits with annular sections of the shinbones of their vanquished foemen while awaiting a knowledge of the metals is apparently not nearly exhausted, and we are far less likely to see the end of it than it is to see the end of us. It is more probable, indeed, that the nose-ring will return to bless us than that the finger-ring will add itself to the melancholy list of good things gone before.

Amongst the several tribes of our species

the habit of encircling the human finger with something not contemplated in the original design of that variously useful member is almost universal, and it so far antedates history and tradition that by another sort of lying than either it has been outfitted with a divine origin. In ancient Egypt it was ascribed to Osiris, whose priests were distinguished from meaner mortals by finger-rings of a peculiar and mystical design, having a profound significance all the more impressive by reason of its impenetrability to conjecture. Perchol, however, has an ingenious theory that it was intended to puzzle the Egyptologist of the time-to-be; an instance of foresight which one can commend while deploring the unworthy motive at the back of it.

Amongst the ancient Jews rings were symbols of authority, as we see in the case of Joseph, to whom the Pharaoh gave one when he made him Governor; and this was a common use of rings in all antiquity. They were credentials of ambassadors and messengers, and served in place of written commissions, which, frequently it was impossible to give, for the commissioning power could not write, and which would have been ineffective, for most other persons could not read. In mat-

ters of business the ring was a power-of-attorney. Its usefulness in this way was suggested, doubtless, by the difficulty of imposture: written authorization may easily be forged, but a ring can not well be obtained from the finger of its owner without his consent.

The attribution of magical and medicinal virtues to rings pervades all ancient and mediæval story. Gyges, King of Lydia, had a ring by which the wearer could become invisible—a result accomplishable, though sometimes too tardily, by our modern plan of going away. One of the Kings of Lombardy had a ring which told him in what direction to travel. It may have contained a compass, though to that theory is opposed the objection that he antedated the invention of that instrument. But (I make the suggestion with humility) may not his have been the compass afterward invented? Medicated rings were in popular use in ancient Rome. An efficacious design for these, according to Trallian, a physician of the fourth century, was Hercules strangling the Nemæan lion. This, he assures us, is, if well engraved, a specific for stomach-ache. Throughout mediæval Europe belief in the healing power of certain rings

was widely diffused; but then, as now, persons free from gross superstitions preferred to treat their disorders by touching the relics of saints.

Rings engraved with the names of the Magi were once in great medical repute, but in 1674 a learned prelate threw discredit upon them by showing that the true names were not known, being variously given as Melchior, Balthasar and Jasper; Apellius, Amerus and Damascus; Ator, Sator and Petratoras. As the author of *Ben-Hur* has given the weight of his authority to the first three names, the healing-ring may with some confidence be engraved with them and pushed back into its old place in public esteem. But before risking any money in the manufacture it would be prudent to test upon a few patients the accuracy of General Wallace's historical knowledge by administering the names of his choice internally.

A ring presented to Edward the Confessor cured epilepsy, and after the death of the royal owner by another and hardier disease it was preserved as a relic in Westminster Abbey. Rings which had been blessed, or even touched, by the sovereign were for some centuries considered worthy of a place in the

British *materia medica;* and such would doubtless command a high price to-day in the American market—not to keep the purchaser in good health, but to make his neighbors sick with envy.

Of all rings possessing magical or medicinal virtues the toadstone ring of our fathers was the most interesting. It was well known to those ingenious naturalists that

> the toad, ugly and venomous,
> Wears yet a precious jewel in his head,

as Shakspeare was at the trouble to point out. It was customary to set this in a ring and wear it, for it had the useful property of changing color and sweating when poison was about. As poison was one of the commonest means by which our easy-going ancestors accomplished the end of one another's sojourn in this vale of tears a monitor of that kind was extremely useful to have literally "on hand at meal-time."

Certain stones were once regarded as having maleficent properties and were never set in rings. A chronicler relates that a certain knight in one of the crusades possessed himself of a costly scimitar belonging to a Sara-

cen whom he had slain, and became so expert in its use that he discarded his own weapon and used the other. But from that time forth he met with nothing but disaster and shame. It was discovered that in fitting the scimitar with a cross-hilt, as Christian piety demanded, the malicious armorer had substituted for one of the gems an emerald, which by some secret process he had disguised. The malign stone and the armorer's head having been removed the prowess of the knight was again effective and he rose to great distinction and honor. In the folk-lore of some of the riparian peoples along the Danube the topaz was listed as a peculiar possession of the Adversary of Souls. It was held that if one could by force or fraud get a topaz ring upon an enemy's finger it would be impossible to remove it, and the victim would go, body and soul, to the devil. Advancing enlightenment has effaced these silly superstitions; we now know that the opal only is really malign.

We have it on the authority of Shakspeare that at least Aldermen wore thumb rings, for Falstaff avers that before he was blown up like a bladder by sighing and grief he could have crept through one, being "not an eagle's talon in the waist." If the custom had lived

till our time Aldermen would have been at considerable expense for thumb-rings, for their fingers are all thumbs everywhere but in the public pocket. As engagements and weddings subtend a pretty wide angle in the circle of human life in modern times the ring is perhaps a more important factor in the happiness of at least one-half the race than ever before; and that half is the more conservative half; it and its customs are not soon parted. Not that engagement rings and wedding rings are a new thing under the sun: amongst several ancient peoples the wedding ring was an institution of prime importance. The bride's investiture with that sign and symbol of wifehood was not merely in attestation of the wedding; it was the wedding. Divorce consisted in pulling it off, and that simple act—commonly performed by the husband—was not complicated with any questions of counsel fees, alimony and custody of the children.

The finger-ring will probably maintain its "ancient, solitary reign" for some time yet. The custom of wearing it is too deeply rooted in the nature of things, and the root has too many ramifications to be lightly renounced by virtue of any royal rescript of the "queens of fashion" in Paris, London or New York.

It is not a mere garden plant growing loosely in the artificial top-soil of human vanity, but a hardy perennial, having a firm hold in many substrata of character and tradition, and eliciting nourishment from all. The finger-ring is on to stay.

FIN DE SIECLE

AN end-of-the-century horse is doubtless pretty much the same as a horse of another period, but is there not in literature, art, politics and in intellectual and moral matters generally, an element, a spirit peculiar to the time and not altogether discernible to observation—a something which, not hitherto noted, or at least not so noticeable, now "pervades and animates the whole?" It seems to me that there is. Precisely what is its nature? That is not easy to answer; the thing is felt rather than observed. It is subtle, elusive, addressing, perhaps, only those sensibilities for whose needs of expression our English vocabulary makes little provision. I should with some misgiving call it the note of despair, or, more accurately, desperation. It sounds through the tumult of our lives as the boatswain's whistle penetrates with a vibrant power the uproar of the storm—the singing and shouting of the wind in the cordage, the hissing of the waves, the shock and thunder

of their monstrous buffets as they burst against the ship. O there's a meaning in the phrase —a significance born of iteration. As certain predictions by their power upon the imagination assist in their own fulfilment, so this haunting phrase has made itself a meaning and shaped the facts to fit it. In the twilight of the century we have prophecies of the coming night, and see ghosts.

We are all dominated by our imaginations and our views are creatures of our viewpoints. To the ordinary mind the end of a century seems the end of one of a series of stages of progress, arranged in straight-away order, and impossible of prolongation. To turn the end of one line is to go back and begin it all *de novo* on a parallel line—an end of progress, a long leap to the rear, a slow and painful resumption. Of course there is nothing in the facts to correspond to this fanciful and fantastic notion, but it is none the less powerful for that. To the person of that order of mind it undoubtedly seems that with the final year of the century the race will have lost a century of some advantage which he is not likely to see regained. He does not think that—he thinks nothing at all about it—he merely feels so, and can not even formulate

the feeling. Quite the same it colors his moods, his character, his very manner of life and action. He has something of the ghastly gaiety of the plague-smitten soldiers in the song, who drank to those already dead and hurrahed for those about to die. The *fin de siècle* spirit is fairly expressible by an intention to make the most of a vanishing opportunity by doing something out of the common.

Nearly everywhere we observe this spirit translating itself into acts and phenomena. In religion it finds manifestation in repair of "creeds outworn," in acceptance of modern miracles, in pilgrimages, in strange and futile attempts at unification—even in toleration. In politics it has overspread the earth with anarchism, socialism, communism, woman suffrage and actual antagonism between the sexes. Industrial affairs show it in unnatural animosities and destructive struggles between employers and employees, in wild aspirations for impossible advantages, in resurrection of crude convictions and methods of antiquity. In literature it has given us realism, in art impressionism, and in both as much else that is false and extravagant as it is possible to name. In morals it has gone to the length of denying the expedience of morality. In all civilized

countries crime is so augmenting, the sociologists tell us, that national earnings will not much longer be sufficient to support the machinery for its repression. Madness and suicide are advancing "by leaps and bounds," and wars were never so needless and reasonless as now. Everywhere are a wild welter of action and thought, a cutting loose from all that is conservative and restraining, a "carnival of crime," a reign of unreason.

Not everywhere: superior to all this madness, tranquil in the midst of it, and to some degree controlling it, stands Science, inaccessible to its malign influence and unaffectable by the tumult. Why?—how? God knows; I only perceive that the scientific mind has an imagination of its own kind. To him who has been trained to accurate observation and definite thought a century of years does not seem to have an end—it is simply one hundred times round the sun; and at the last moment of our *siècle* we shall be just where we have been a million times before, under no different cosmic conditions. He is not impressed with "the sadness of it," feels no desperation —sees nothing in it. He keeps his head—which, by the way, is worth keeping.

1898.

TIMOTHY H. REARDEN

IN the death of Judge Rearden the world experienced a loss that is more likely adequately to be estimated in another generation than in this. A lawyer dies and his practice passes to others. A judge falls in harness, another is appointed or elected, and the business of the court goes on as before, frequently better. But for the vacant place of a scholar and man of letters there are no applicants. To him there is no successor: neither the President has the appointing power nor the people the power to elect. The vacancy is permanent, the loss irreparable; something has gone out of the better and higher life of the community which can not be replaced, and the void is the dead man's best monument, invisible but eternal. Other scholars and men of letters will come forward in the new generation, but of none can it be said that he carries forward on the same lines the work of the "vanished hand," nor declares exactly those truths of nature and

art that would have been formulated by the "voice that is still."

In that elder education which was once esteemed the only needful intellectual equipment of a gentleman, those attainments still commonly, and perhaps preferably, denoted by the word "scholarship," Judge Rearden was probably without an equal on his side of the continent. Except by his habit of historical and literary allusion—to which he was perhaps somewhat over-addicted—and by that significant something, so difficult to name, yet to the discerning few so obvious, in the thought and speech of learned men, which is not altogether breadth and reach of reason nor altogether subtlety of taste and sentiment—in truth, is compatible with their opposites—except for these indirect disclosures he seldom and to few indeed gave even a hint of the enormous acquired wealth in the treasury of his mind. Graduated from a second-rate college in Ohio with little but a knowledge of Latin and Greek, a studious habit and a disposition so unworldly that it might almost be called unearthly, he pursued his amassment of knowledge with the unfailing diligence of an unfailing love, to the end. He knew not only the classical languages and many of the

tongues of modern Europe, but their several dialects as well. To know a language is nothing, but to know its literature from the beginning, and to have incorporated its veritable essence and spirit into mind and character —that is much; and that is what Rearden had done with regard to all these tongues. Doubtless this is not the meat upon which intellectual Cæsars feed; doubtless, too, he did not make that full use of his attainments which the world approves as "practical," and at which he smiled in his odd, tolerant way, as one may smile at the earnest work of a child making mud pies; yet his was not altogether a barren pen. Of Bret Harte's bright band of literary coadjutors on the old *Overland Monthly* he was among the first and best, and at several times, though irregularly and all too infrequently, he enriched *The Californian* and other periodicals with noble contributions in prose and verse. Among the former were essays on Petrarch and Tennyson; the latter included a poem of no mean merit on the Charleston earthquake, and another which he had intended to read before the George H. Thomas Post of the Grand Army of the Republic, but was prevented by his last illness. Read now in the solemn light that lies along

his path through the Valley of the Shadow, the initial stanza seems to have a significance almost prophetic:

Life's fevered day declines; its purple twilight falling,
Draws lengthening shadows from the broken flanks;
And from the column's head a viewless chief is calling:
"Guide right—close up the ranks."

Some of his papers for the Chitchat Club could not easily be matched by selections from the magazines and reviews, and if a collection were made of the pieces that he loved to put out in that wasteful way we should have a volume of notable reading, distinguished for a sharply accented individuality of thought and style.

For a number of years before his death Rearden was engaged in constructing (the word writing here is inadequate) a work on Sappho, which, as I understand the matter, was to be a kind of compendium of all the little that is known and pretty nearly all the much that has been conjectured and said of her. It was to be profusely illustrated by master-hands, copiously annotated and enriched with variorum readings—a book for bookworms. Of its fate I am not advised, but

trust that none of this labor of love may be lost. A work which for many years engaged the hand and the heart of such a man can not, of whatever else it may be devoid, lack that distinction which is to literature what it is to character—its life, its glory and its crown.

1892.

THE PASSING OF THE HORSE

CERTAIN admirers of the useful, beautiful, dangerous and senseless beast known to many of them as the "hoss" are promising the creature a life of elegant leisure, with opportunities for mental culture which he has not heretofore enjoyed. Universal use of the automobile in all its actual and possible forms and for all practical purposes in the world's work and pleasure is to relieve the horse from his onerous service and give him a life of ease "and a perpetual feast of nectared sweets."

The horse of the future is to do no work, have no cares, be immune to the whip, the saddle, the harness and the unwelcome attentions of the farrier. He is to toil not, neither spin, yet Nebuchadnezzar in all his glory was not stabled and pastured as he is to be. In brief, the automobile is going to make of this bad world a horse elysium, where the tired brute can repose on beds of amaranth and moly, to the eminent satisfaction of his body and his mind.

There is reason to fear that all these hopes

will not come to fruitage. It is not seen just why a generation of selfish and somewhat preoccupied human beings who know not the horse as an animal of utility should cherish him as a creature of merit. We have already one pensioner on our bounty who does little that is useful in return for his keep and an incalculable multitude of things which we would prefer that he should not do if he could be persuaded to forego them—the domestic dog, to wit. We are not likely to augment our burden by addition of the obsolete horse. Those of us who, through stress of necessity or the promptings of Paris, have tested our teeth upon him know that he is not very good to eat; he will hardly be cultivated for the table, like the otherwise inutile and altogether unhandsome pig. The present vogue of the horse as a comestible, a viand, is without the knowledge and assent of the consumer, but an abattoir having its outlying corrals gorged with waiting horses would be an object of public suspicion and constabular inquiry. As a provision against human hunger the horse may be considered out of the running. Hard, indeed, were the heart of the father who would regale the returning prodigal with a fatted colt.

There will be no horses in our "leisure

class," for there will be no horses. The species will be as effectually effaced by the automobile as if it had run over them. If the new machine fulfills all the hopes that now begin to cluster about it the man of the future will find a deal of our literature and art unintelligible. To him the equestrian statue, for example, will be an even more astonishing phenomenon than it commonly is to us.

There is a suggestion in all this to our good and great friends, the vegetarians. They do not easily tire of pointing out the brutality of slaughtering animals to get their meat, although it is not obvious that we could eat them alive. We should breed some of these edible creatures anyhow, for they serve other needs than those of appetite; but others, like the late Belgian hare, who virtually passed away as soon as the breeders and dealers failed to convince us that we were eating him, would become extinct. Many millions of meat-bearing animals owe whatever of life we grant them to the fact that we mean eventually to deprive them of it. Seeing that they are so soon to be "done for," they may not understand what they were "begun for"; but if life is a blessing, as most of us believe and themselves seem to believe, for they manifest a certain reluctance to give it up, why, even a short

life is a thing to be thankful for. If we had not intended to kill them they would not have lived at all.

From this superior point of view even the royal sport of slaughtering such preserved game as the English pheasant seems a trifle less brutal than it is commonly affirmed to be by those of us who are not invited to the killing. This argument, too, has an obvious application in the instance of that worthy Russian sect that denies the right of man to enslave horses, oxen, etc. But for man's fell purpose of enslaving them there would be none.

And what about the American negro? Had it not been for the cruel greed of certain Southern planters and Yankee skippers where would he be? Would he be anywhere? So we see how all things work together for the general good, and evil itself is a blessing in disguise. No African slavery, no American negro; no American negro, no Senator Hanna's picturesque bill to pension his surviving ancestors. And without that we should indubitably be denied the glittering hope of a similar bill pensioning the entire negro race!

1903.

NEWSPAPERS

I

THE influence of some newspapers on republican government is discernibly good; that of the enormous majority conspicuously bad. Conducted by rogues and dunces for dunces and rogues, these are faithful to nothing but the follies and vices of our system, strenuously opposing every intelligent attempt at their elimination. They fetter the feet of wisdom and stiffen the prejudices of the ignorant. They are sycophants to the mob, tyrants to the individual. They constitute a menace to organized society—a peril to government of any kind; and if ever in America Anarchy shall beg to introduce his dear friend Despotism we shall have to thank our vaunted "freedom of the press" as the controlling spirit of the turbulent time, and Lord of Misrule. We may then be grateful too that, like a meteor consumed by friction of the denser atmosphere which its speed compressed, its bright-

est blaze will be its last. The despot whose path to power it illumined will extinguish it with a dash of ink.

II

An elective judiciary is slow to enforce the law against men before whom its members come every few years in the character of suppliants for favor; and how abjectly these learned candidates can sue, how basely bid for a newspaper's support, one must have been an editor to know. The press has grown into a tyranny to which the courts themselves are servile. To rule all classes and conditions of men with an iron authority the newspapers have only to learn a single trick, against the terrible power of which, when practised by others, they "continually do cry," with apparently never a thought of the advantage it might be to themselves—the trick of combination. This lesson once learned, Liberty may bury her own remains, for assuredly none will perform that pious office for her with impunity. It has not come to that yet, but when by virtue of controlling a newspaper a man is permitted to print and circulate thousands of copies of a slander which neither he nor any man would dare to speak before his victim's

friends a long step has been taken toward the goal of entire irresponsibility. George Augustus Sala said that from sea to sea America was woman's kingdom, which she ruled with absolute sway. Yet in America the father does not protect his daughter, the son his mother, the brother his sister nor the husband his wife, except in the theatrical profession, by way of advertisement. The noblest and most virtuous lady in the land may be coarsely derided, her reputation stabbed, her face, figure or toilet made the subject of a scurrile jest, and no killing ensue, provided the offense be committed with such circumstances of dissemination and publicity as types alone can give it.

III

If the editor of a newspaper has any regard for his judgment; that is, if he has any judgment, he will not indulge in prophecy. The most conspicuous instances of the folly of predictions are those that occur in a political "campaign." There is a venerable and hoary tradition among those ignorant persons who conduct party organs that the best and most effective way to make their party win is to assert and re-assert that it *will*. This in-

fantile notion they act upon *ad nauseam,* and doubtless lose by it a good many votes for their party that it would otherwise receive, by making the more credulous among their readers so sure of success that they do not think it worth while to vote. If you could convince an unborn babe that it was going to be born with a silver spoon in its mouth it would not exert itself to procure that spoon.

But making all due allowance for what the babes first above mentioned do from "policy," it remains true that partisan editors—whose bump of common sense is countersunk till it would hold a hen's egg—actually believe in the inevitable success of their ticket every time and once more. The election comes and a half of them are shown to their readers in the true character of persons whose judgment is not worth a pin on any matter under the sun. The mantle of the prophet having been raped away from the partisan editor's shoulders, it is seen that motley is his only wear, and his readers—themselves of equal incapacity—feel for him ever thereafter the contempt which he made such sacrifices to deserve. Does it teach him anything? Something Solomon hath said on this point—something about a fool and a mortar.

The editor-person's defense is somewhat as follows: "The income of my paper depends not alone upon the favor of its readers, but upon that of the party managers, and these latter certainly, if not the former, would withhold their patronage (keeping it in the campaign fund) if I did not 'whoop her up.' They believe in literary brass-banding and fireworking. They wish to hear 'Hail to the Chief' in every editorial line and in all the dispatches. If I exclude from my columns news that is not news, but the outgivings of partisan enthusiasm or the calculated falsehoods of partisan chicanery; if, in short, I refuse to sell dishonest goods, I lose my chance at the loaves and fishes and my paper is deposed from its proud position as an organ."

As to all that I have nothing to say. If a man choose to defend the picking of others' pockets by the plea that it fills his own, and that if he stop his pal will no longer divide with him, the only cogent reply that I know of is to call the police.

As to the "general reader," who is not entirely a scoundrel nor altogether a fool, he requires no assurances of success to keep his courage up. In order to retain his favor it is unnecessary to seem no wiser than himself and

to share with him the dirty last ditch of his broken hope every few years. The notion that an editor must "identify" himself with all the wild and fallacious hopes of his readers, with all their blind, brute prejudices and with the punishment of them, is a discreditable tradition of the newspaper business, having nothing in it. The traditions of every business are the creation of little, timid men whose half-success is achieved, not by their methods, but in spite of them, and because of the scarcity of men of brains. If these were plentiful there would be nothing left for the traditionaries to accomplish. The man of brains makes his success by the clarity of his understanding: by discerning beneath the traditions the principles, and, ignoring the former, applying the latter in his own way—which his competitors and successors fondly believe they can imitate by following his methods. In nothing has a great success, or rather a succession of great successes, been made except by cutting loose from the traditions and doing what the veteran experts gasp to observe.

IV

Some years ago—as lately as the presidential contest between Cleveland and Blaine—it

was a cast-iron tradition of journalism that personal defamation was a necessary and effective aid to success. True, every newspaper deprecated it in a general way, and rose at it, shrieking when it hurt; but nearly all practised it and always had done so. Every political campaign was a disgraceful welter of detraction and calumniation. To snout out a candidate's "personal record," and if it was found clean befoul it—that was what the partisan editor regarded as his first and highest duty to his party. The besmirching of candidates was a tradition sacred and inviolable; it is now a dead practice, and we have probably seen the last campaign of mud-slinging. The thing might advantageously have been stopped at any time. The people did not demand it; they were as decent then as now. The case was that newspaper men did not know their business; and in respect of many other disreputable survivals they do not know it now. I could name a full dozen newspaper traditions now in full and strenuous vitality that are as needless and mischievous as the vilification of candidates. They will all die hard, but die they must, for the world will finally fall into the sun, which will consume them.

V

That the newspapers might with advantage to the community be made a deal cleaner is a proposition hardly open to question. In my judgment this could be done without loss to their owners, but that is an irrelevant consideration. It is not permitted to them to urge that a decenter course would ruin them, for the community is under no obligation to make publication of newspapers profitable. To the editorial argument, "I have to live," the answer is, "Yes, but not in that way." That plea is precisely as valid when made by the burglar. Every one who has not committed a capital crime has a right to live, but no one has a right to live by mischief.

Clean newspapers if enterprising, honest and clever do thrive; so what is really meant by "the right to live" is the right to live in luxury—the right to a great income, instead of a smaller one. There is no such right. If there were it would spare from condemnation the grocer who sells poisonous goods because there is a demand for them, the noctivagant Dago crying his rotten tamales, the quack doctor in pursuit of his patient's health. There is no such right.

Charles Dudley Warner said, and it is repeated after him with tireless iteration, that nearly every publisher of a newspaper is making a better paper than he can afford to make. That is true, provided (1) that good newspapers are not so well supported as bad, and (2) that publishers cannot "afford" to be poor, or only moderately wealthy. Some of the best and greatest men in the world, including Jesus Christ, have thought they could afford to be poor. Poverty is not dear at the price that one pays for it; it is dirt-cheap. Any one can afford it, and many can not afford to be without it.

The right to publish news *because* it is news has no basis in law nor in morals; nor dare its most intrepid protagonist assert his claim in consistent practice. Every newspaper man learns almost daily of occurrences so lurid, of sins so "sensational," of crimes so awful that they have immunity from print. The world is not only a good deal better but a good deal worse than it looks through any newspaper. An editor has constantly to "draw the line"; he can draw it where he pleases—nobody is compelling him to "go far" in publication of immorality. To assert a right to do so; to affirm other compulsion than curiosity

—that is dishonest. It is dishonest to unload his responsibility upon the shoulders of even the sinners whose sins he relates. They break the laws of decency, but they do not compel him to. They do not force him to expose for sale narratives of their offenses; they prefer that he do not. He has no mandate to make the way of the transgressor hard: we have laws for that. He has only the mandate of his pocket; if in obeying it he damage or disgust or distress the best persons among whom he lives he can not plead the profit that he makes in gratification of the others. It is no way desirable that they be gratified.

A BENIGN INVENTION

I

THE phonograph has not accomplished all that was expected of it, yet it has proved a most interesting and valuable invention. One of its achievements is of the nature of a revelation: it has proved that even the most loquacious person is unacquainted with the sound of his own voice. As reproduced by the machine, one's voice seems to be that of a stranger: his ear does not recognize it, and he is with difficulty convinced that he hears himself as others hear him. Commonly, it is said, the effect is deeply disappointing; the tones are not so rich and mellow as he had a right to expect, and he leaves the instrument with a chastened spirit and a broken pride.

The instrument has herein a broad field of usefulness. As a teacher of humility it takes rank with the parson, the flirt, the mirror and the banana peel on the sidewalk. It humbles the orator and strews repentant ashes on the

head of the ardent young woman who has taken lessons in elocution but none in forbearance. The amateur who has always a cold when pressed to sing takes on an added reluctance having in it an element of sincerity. In the meek taciturnity of the "good conversationalist" society finds a new edification and delight.

For these and similar benefactions let us be truly thankful; but we should not hope for too much. The blessing is bright, but it may not be lasting. It is not in human nature to wear sackcloth and ashes as a permanent apparel. In the valley of humility are no old residents. As much as is herein affirmed of the phonograph might with equal reason have been expected from its elder brother, the photograph. "Who," it might once have been asked, "will have the hardihood to go unveiled and unblushing after experiencing the awful revelations of the camera?" Alas! man was created upright, but he has sought out many improvements. No sooner had the merciless sun-picture begun to take the conceit out of us than some ingenious malefactor rushed to the rescue with a process called "retouching," whereby the once honest camera was made to lie like a lover; men and women

resumed their vanity, revised and enlarged it, and made it a means of afflicting their friends with portraits that shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone.

The ingenuity that invented the phonograph can adapt it to our need and our hope by taking the sting out of it. Mr. Edison will doubtless discern a commercial advantage in devising a method of "retouching" the little waxen cylinder—so smoothing its asperities that it will give off tones and cadences radically different from, and infinitely superior to, those that it received. The most rasping nasal twang will be transmuted "into something rich and strange." The catarrhal accent of the Boston maiden will reappear as that "vocal velvet" wherewith the British blondes of the "Black Crook" period enravished the soul of Richard Grant White. The irritating stammerer will ejaculate into the machine his impedimentary utterances and get them back in a smooth rill of speech—a fluent, flute-like warble. We shall easily learn to accept these pleasing vocal fictions, deriving from the falsified record a rich and high delight. Enamored of what we conceive to be the music of our own voices, and persuaded of their happy effect upon others,

we shall cultivate loquacity as an art and practice prolixity as a virtue. In the retouched phonogram lurk the promise and potency of a pleasure incomparably more mischievous than the confusion of tongues on the plain of Shinar.

II

There appears to be no reason to doubt that Mr. Edison's most remarkable invention, the theoscope, has a great future before it. An instrument that enables us to see another as he sees himself must accomplish great good by promoting clear understandings between man and man, and subjecting estimates of personal character to the chance of revision. As matters now stand, and have stood from time immemorial, our opinion of even a man whom we have known from infancy is formed by a series of what are known to journalism as "Star Chamber proceedings," in which the man himself is not heard with that fulness and frankness that are desirable. It is hardly fair either to convict or to acquit him—nay, even to honor or reward him—upon indirect testimony, introduced by him for another purpose. True justice obviously requires that A

in making up his mind about B should in some way, if possible, avail himself of the advantage of looking into a mind already made up—a mind enriched and instructed by longer and nearer observation of the subject upon which light is sought: in short, B's mind. If Mr. Edison's invention make this as practicable as (if practicable) it is imperative, he has indeed brought "joy to the afflicted" in a way to make the proprietor of a patent medicine grow green with envy.

That he should call his marvelous and delicate appliance a theoscope appears at first thought a reasonless and wanton exercise of the right of nomenclature; but on reflection the name seems singularly appropriate. "Theoscope," I venture to inform the reader unacquainted with Greek, is from the words Θεός, god, and σκοπειν, to view. The theoscope is therefore an instrument with which to look at gods. When one man sees another as the other sees himself, the image, naturally, is one of supernatural dignity and importance —one worthy of divine honors, even if 'tis not in mortals to command them. One hardly knows which to admire the more, the ingenuity that invented the theoscope or the inspiration that named it.

Most readers are more or less disposed to agree with Burns that the gift to see ourselves as others see us would from many a blunder free us, and foolish notion; but few, probably, have reflected on the considerable advantage of seeing others as they see themselves. It seems certain, for example, that it would notably minish the acerbities of debate if each of two disputants could behold in the other, not an obstinate, pig-headed malefactor endeavoring by unfair means to establish an idiotic proposition, but a high-hearted philanthropist, benevolent and infallible, tenderly concerned for an erring opponent's reclamation and intellectual prosperity. The general use of the theoscope in newspaper offices can hardly fail profoundly to modify and mollify discussion, in range and heat. When the editor of the *Cow County Opinionator* has written down the editor of the *Hog's-Back Allegationist* as "a loathsome contemporary whose moral depravity is only exceeded by his social degradation, and whose skill in horse-stealing has been thought worthy of record in the books of a court which his ill-gotten gold was unable to corrupt," it may occur to him to ring up his enemy and inveigle him to the other end of the appar-

atus. The god-like image of a blameless man and generous rival which will then confront him he may know in his soul to be an incredibly counterfeit presentment, but the moral effect of looking at a noble work of the imagination is to soften the heart and elevate the sentiments: he will probably find something in his written censure which he would willingly let die save for the precious example of its incomparable style.

If the theoscope may be expected to work so desirable moral changes in the man at the receiving instrument, what may we not hope as to its influence on the person before the transmitter? To be seen at last as one really is (according to one's own belief) must necessarily be supremely gratifying to all who have known and bewailed the opacity of the glass through which they have hitherto been seen darkly. No longer doomed to chafe under the disability that forbids expression, our natures must expand to something nearly as great and good as that other self which we can send over the wire by merely touching a button. When a famous cartoonist had the justice to offset his weekly caricatures by representing his favorite victims once as they would have represented themselves he doubt-

less did something toward discrediting his own conceptions and justifying theirs. There are persons whom nothing will reform, but it would be possible to make a long list of "prominent citizens" who would be lifted to the breezy altitudes of a higher and better life by the consciousness, however erroneous, of the power so to present their true personalities that he who runs may read, instead of so that he who reads runs, as now.

ACTORS AND ACTING

I

WAS Sir Henry Irving a great actor? Possibly; there is abundant testimony, little evidence. The testimony of Englishmen is to be received with caution, for Irving was an Englishman; that of Americans with greater caution, for the same reason. The narrowest provincialism in the world is that of great cities, and London is the greatest city. What London says all England repeats; and America affirms it on oath. It is understood, as a matter of course, that in the judgment of England the best English actor, writer or artist is the best in the world. If one has conquered his way to the foremost place in the approval of a small London clique, not, in the case of an actor, exceeding a half-dozen men promoted to power by a process of selection with which ability has had nothing to do, one has conquered half the world. It would be easy to name the half-dozen who made Henry

Irving's fame and set it sailing o'er the seas with bellying canvas and flag apeak. On this side no one ever demanded the ship's papers. This is Echoland, home of the dittomaniac. We are freemen, but not bigoted ones.

For aught I know Irving may have been as good an actor as his countrymen who saw him thought him. Nay, he may have been half as good as my countrymen who did not see him think him. I myself saw him play only two or three times. He was not then a good actor, but that was a long time before his death; judgment from the fading memory of a performance decades ago would hardly do. Wherein, then, lies excuse of this present infervency—this cry *qui vive* at the outpost of the camp? Herein. Not only were Irving's credentials defective; there is a strong presumption that the defect was irreparable—that they "certificate a sham." This defect was racial. The English are, if not an unemotional, an undemonstrative people. When sad the Englishman does not weep, when pleased he does not laugh. Anger him and he will neither stamp nor tear his hair; startle him and he jumps not an inch. His conversation is destitute of vivacity and unaided by

gesticulation. His face does not light up when he deems it his duty to smile. His transports of affection are moderated to the seemly ceremony of shaking hands; though he is said sometimes to kiss his grandmother if she is past seventy and will let him. Removed from his brumous environment, the English human being becomes in time accessible to light and heat—penetrable by the truth that all manifestation of emotion and sentiment is not necessarily vulgar; but in the tight little isle Stolidity holds her immemorial sway without other change in the administrative function than occasional substitution of the stare of deprecation for the stare of complacency.

To suppose that great actors can come of a race like that is to trifle with the laws of nature. Acting is preëminently the art of expression—expression of the sentiments and emotions by speech, look, gesture, movement —in every way that one person can address the eye and ear of another. It requires the acutest and alertest sensibilities, faculties all responsive to subtle stirs of feeling. Are these English characteristics? Clearly not; they are those of the peoples that (in England) are despised as "volatile," "garrulous,"

"excitable"—the French and Italians, for examples, who have produced the only really good actors of modern times. Our own actors are better than the English, but not good; one sees better acting about a dining-table in Paris than has ever been seen on the stage of London or New York—excepting when it is held by players in whose veins is the fire of Southern suns, whose nerves dance to the rhythmic beat of Mediterranean ripples and

> keep, with Capri's sunny fountains,
> Perpetual holiday.

One pale globule of our cold Teutonic blood queers the whole performance. For German, English and American actors society should provide "homes," with light employment, good plain food and, when they keep their mouths shut and their limbs quiet, thunders of artificial applause.

II

Few respectable shams are to me more distasteful than the affectation of delight in the performance of an actor who speaks his lines in a tongue unknown to the audience, as did

sometimes the late Signor Rossi in the rôle of "Otello." It is of the essence and validity of acting that it address the understanding through the ear as well as the eye. The tones of an actor's voice, however pleasing, do not address the understanding at all without intelligible words; they are no more than the notes of a violin—the pleasure they give is purely sensual, and the speaker might as well articulate no words at all. A play, or a part in a play, performed in unfamiliar speech is hardly better than a pantomime, and those who profess to find in it an intellectual gratification—well, they may be very estimable persons, for aught I know.

It is not enough, in order to enjoy "Othello" or "Hamlet," that the audience have a general familiarity with the part; their knowledge of it must be minute and precise. They must know of what particular sentiment a facial expression is the visible exponent; of what particular word a gesture is the accompaniment. Else how can they know that the look is natural, the motion impressive? If one had memorized the part *verbatim,* and the meaning of every word, the accidental omission of a sentence would break the chain, and all that the eye should afterward report

of the passage would be meaningless. How shall you know that the actor "suits the action to the word" if you know not the word? To a mind ignorant of Italian the "Otello" of Signor Rossi may have been a noble exercise in guessing; as acting it can have had no value.

III

We are all familiar with the hoary old dictum that the public has no concern with the private lives of the show folk. I must ask leave to differ. I must insist that the public has a most serious interest in the chastity of girls and the fidelity of wives. It is not good for the public that its women be taught by conspicuous example that to her who possesses a single talent, or any number of talents, a life of shame is no bar to public adulation. Every young and inexperienced woman believes herself to have some commanding quality which properly fostered will bring her fame. If she knows that she can do nothing else she thinks that she can write poetry. Is not the father mad who shows his ambitious daughter how little men really care for virtue —how tolerant they are of vice if it be gilded with genius? Worse and most shameful of

all, women who clutch away their skirts from contact with some poor devil of a girl who having soiled herself is unable to sing herself out of the mire, will take their pure young girls to see the world worshiping at the feet of a wanton and her paramour because, forsooth, both are gifted and one is beautiful. Let these tender younglings lay well to heart the lesson in charity. Let them not forget that in their parents' judgment an uncommon physical formation, joined with an exceptional talent, excuses an immoral life.

Talent? Beauty alone is all-sufficient. Was not the whole eastern half of this continent, at one time, overhung with clouds of incense burned at the shrine of Beauty unadorned with virtue? Did not the western half give it hospitable welcome and set the wreath upon a brow still reeking of a foreign lecher's royal kisses and the later salutes of an impossible gambler? She was not even an actress—she could play nothing but the devil. The foundation of her fame and fortune was scandal—scandal lacking even the excuse of love. She had the sagacity to boast of a distinction that she enjoyed in common with a hundred less thrifty dames. She knew the shortest cut to the American heart and pocket.

She knew that American fathers, husbands, brothers, sons and lovers would be so base as to come and bring her gold, and that American mothers, wives, sisters, daughters and sweethearts would be bad enough to accompany them, to gaze without a blush at the posings of a simpleton recommended by a prince. She gathered her sheaves and went away. She came back to the re-ripening harvest, hoping that God would postpone the destruction of a corrupt land until she could get out of it.

Heaven forbid that I should set myself up as a censor of any offenders save those who have the hardihood to continue infamous; I only beg to point out that when Christ shielded the woman taken in adultery he did not tell her that if she were a good singer she might go her way and sin more. That is how I answer the ever-ready sneer about "casting the first stone." That is how I cast it. If the fallen woman, finding herself possessed of a single talent, had gone into business as a show without reforming her private morals Christ would not have been found standing all night in line to buy tickets for himself and the Blessed Virgin.

I am for preserving the ancient, primitive

distinction between right and wrong. The virtues of Socrates, the wisdom of Aristotle, the examples of Marcus Aurelius and Jesus Christ are good enough to engage my admiration and rebuke my life. From my fog-scourged and plague-smitten morass I lift reverent eyes to the shining summits of eternal truth, where they stand; I strain my senses to catch the law that they deliver. In every age and clime vice and folly have shared the throne of a double dominance, dictating customs and fashions. At no time has the devil been idle, but his freshest work few eyes are gifted with the faculty to discover. We trace him where the centuries have hardened his tracks into history, but round about us his noiseless footfalls awaken no sense of his near activity.

The subject is too serious to be humorously discussed. This glorification of the world's higher harlotage is one of the great continental facts that no ingenuity, no sophistry, no sublimity of lying can circumnavigate. It marks a civilization that is ripe and rotten. It characterizes an age that has lost the landmarks of right reason. These actors and actresses of untidy lives—they reek audibly. We should not speak of going to see them;

"I am going to smell Miss Molocha Montflummery in 'Juliet'"—that would adequately describe the moral situation. Brains and hearts these persons have none; they are destitute of manners, modesty and sense. The sight of their painted faces, the memory of their horrible slang, their simian cleverness, their vulgar *"aliases,"* their dissolute lives, half emotion and half wine—these are a sickness to any cleanly soul.

Moreover, I advance the belief that any woman who publicly, for gain or glory, charity or caprice, makes public exhibition of any talent or grace that she may happen to have, maculates the chastity of her womanhood, and is thenceforth unworthy of a manly love. No man of sensibility but feels a twinge on reading his wife's, or his sister's, or his daughter's name in print; none but trembles to hear it upon the lips of strangers. You might easily prove the absurdity of this feeling; but she is the wisest, and cleanest, and sweetest, and best beloved who is not at the pains to disregard it. Gentlemen, charge your glasses—here's a health to the woman that is not a show.

1893.

THE VALUE OF TRUTH

THE Texas Legislature once considered a bill that was of some importance to liars. It provided that if a man called another a liar and the latter disclosed his sense of the situation by "putting a head on" the former, the State would hold him guiltless of offense. Texan public opinion naturally viewed it with alarm as an attempt to introduce alien and doubtful customs by substitution of the fist for the bowie-knife. It appears, though, that several States of the Union have laws against calling one a liar. In Virginia, Kentucky and Arkansas, it is a misdemeanor punishable by fine. In Mississippi, South Carolina and West Virginia it is ground for civil action for damages. Georgia makes it a felony if it is untrue. In none of these states, apparently, and nowhere else, is it either a misdemeanor or a felony to *be* a liar. That seems rather queer, does it not? I wonder why it is so.

Now that I think of it, I seem always to

have observed (and possibly the phenomenon has not been overlooked by all others) that the man whom the word "liar" maddens to crime is commonly not maddened to anything in particular by the consciousness of being one.

The philosophy of the matter is that truthfulness, like all the other virtues, takes rank as such because in the long run, and in the greater number of instances, it is expedient. Whatever is, generally speaking, expedient, that is to say, conducive to the welfare of the race, comes to be considered a virtue; whatever, with only the same limitations, does not promote, but obstructs, the welfare of the race is held to be a sin. Morality has, and can have, no other basis than expediency. A virtue is not an end; it is a means; the end is that only conceivable welfare, happiness. To increase the sum of happiness—that is the only worthy ambition, the only creditable motive. Whatever does that is right; whatever does the contrary is wrong. An act that does neither the one nor the other has no moral character at all. That an act can be right or wrong without regard to its consequences is to a sane understanding an unthinkable proposition. It is difficult to imagine a world in

which happiness would commonly be promoted by falsehood, but in such a world falsehood would indubitably be considered, and rightly considered, a virtue, and to be called a truth-teller would be resented as an insult, especially by those most irreclaimably addicted to the habit.

During a recent trial of a postal-service "grafter" a witness confessed with candor that one of his commercial habits was that of saying "the thing that is not." "You can't help telling lies in business," he explained. But you can; you can tell the truth for the good of your soul and make an assignment for the benefit of your creditors.

To be serious, no man of sense really believes that falsehood is necessary to success in business. The practices and customs of every trade and profession are those which commend themselves to approval of small men, men with an impediment in their thought. It is they who virtually conduct the affairs of the world, for there are too few of the other sort to count for much. These little fellows, therefore, "set the fashion," determine the ethics and traditions in business, in law, in medicine, in politics, in religion, in journalism. The most conspicuous characteristic of

this pigmy band is a predisposition to small deceits. The first word that rises to their lips is a lie; the last word that leaves them is a lie. Go into the first shop you find and ask for something not kept there, but which you know all about. Observe the salesman's, or, alas, saleswoman's, alacrity in telling you a lie to induce you to abandon your preference in favor of something that is kept there. Do you fancy it is different in dealing with those higher in the scale of commercial being? A wealthy and most respectable business man once told me that among the two or three scores of similar men with whom he daily dealt there was not one that he could believe; he had to try to discern their secret wishes and intentions through the fog of falsehood in which they sought to conceal them. He had himself a method quite as misleading; he deceived them by telling the truth. They couldn't imagine a man doing a thing like that, so they disbelieved him and he got the better of them.

That is his account of the matter. Perhaps it is true—he may have wanted me to think him a liar. Anyhow, the method of deceit that he professed has sometimes been successfully followed in large affairs, notably by the

late Prince Bismarck. When he entered the field of diplomacy he found it such a nest of liars that for centuries no man in it had believed another. He could deceive only by being truthful, and for many years he fooled all the diplomats by his amazing and confusing candor in disclosing his desires and intentions. If he had lived a thousand years he would have revolutionized diplomacy and would then have reverted, with a special advantage to himself, to the senior practices of the trade. But he died and his method died with him.

If truth is so valuable why do not all truthful men succeed? Because not all truthful men have brains. Not all men of truth and brains have energy. Not all men of truth and brains and energy have opportunity. Not all men of truth and brains and energy and opportunity are lucky. And finally, not all men of truth and brains and energy and opportunity and luck particularly care to succeed; some of us like to ignore the gifts of nature and dawdle through life in something of the peace that we expect after death. Moreover, there is a difference of opinion as to what is success. I know an abandoned wretch who considers himself prosperous

when happy; do you know any one who considers himself happy when prosperous?

In the sweat of their consciences most men eat bread. I doubt if they find it particularly sweet, even when, having a whole loaf, they see a neighbor with none. They are tormented with a craving for pillicum. (There is no such dish as pillicum—that is why they crave it.) Go to, all ye that pursue shadows, or fly from them. Learn to be content with what you have. True, if all were that way there would be an end to civilization, which is the daughter of discontent and worthy of its mother; but that is not your affair. You are custodians of your own happiness and have a right to peace, health and sweet sleep o' nights. You are not bound to take account of hypothetical perils; it will be time to consider the extinction of civilization when you observe that all are becoming content. Contentment is a virtue which at present seems to be confined mainly to the wise and the infamous.

1903.

SYMBOLS AND FETISHES

I

HERALDRY dies hard. It is of purely savage origin, having its roots in the ancient necessity of tribal classification. Before our ancestors had a written language their tribes and families found it convenient to distinguish themselves from one another by rude pictures of such objects as they knew about, with improvements by the artist of the period —the six-legged lion, the two-headed eagle, the spear-point lily and the thistle-with-a-difference. The modifications were infinite; accessories developed into essentials and the science of heraldry was evolved, to explain what the pictures were and expound their meaning. Like the priests and the medicine men of all times, and the lawyers and all other professionals of our time, heralds were swift to discern a profit in complicating their fad with an unthinkable multitude of invented additions and technical shibboleths intelligi-

ble to nobody but themselves; and to-day, when the entire scheme has long ceased to have any practical relation to the lives of men and the polity of nations, there are in Europe high officers of government charged with the duty of its exposition and conservation, and with the custody of its ludicrous muniments and paraphernalia. And men and women accounted intelligent and modest are proud of devices owing their origin to barbarism, their signification to the thrifty ingenuity of drones and leeches and their perpetuation to the same naked and unashamed vanity as that of men who decorate their breasts with "orders" and "crosses" certifying their personal merit.

Where these things exist as "survivals" their use is at least a supportable stupidity; but in America, where they come by cold-blooded adoption essentially simian, they are offensive. Many of the devices upon the seals of our states are no less ridiculous than those used (or the use of any) by some of our "genteel" families to hint at an illustrious descent. Our national coat-of-arms itself is almost enough to make a self-respecting American forswear his allegiance. From a shield with an eagle on it we have developed an eagle

with a shield on it. We may call it the American eagle, but it is the same old bird that tore the heart out of Gaul and the gall out of Carthage; the same that has whetted his bloody beak upon the bones of a thousand tribes now extinct; the same that was fearfully and wonderfully drawn in berry-juice upon rocks to glad the vanity of the shock-headed cave-dweller when the browsing mammoth was flushed with rose in the dawning of time.

II

Says one writing of the "Stars and Stripes":

"The American flag is an emblem not only of freedom but of civilization; and as such, it ought to be beloved and worshiped by all who live under it or who in any wise receive the benefit which it confers on mankind."

That is a pretty fair sample of what one can be brought to feel by inability to think without confusion. Human nature presents no more striking characteristic than the tendency to neglect the substance and consider the shadow; to forget the end, in contemplation and approval of the means; to substitute principle for action and ceremony for principle;

to attribute to the symbol the virtues of the thing symbolized. It evidently did not occur to the patriotic gentleman who wrote the quoted sentence, and much else in the same spirit, that the flag being only an "emblem" of freedom and civilization (our kind of freedom and civilization, by the way) is not at all entitled to the love and worship that he solicits for it; these should go, not to the flag, but to the things of which it is an emblem—to freedom and civilization. His idolatrous tendency and his truly heathenish confusion of mind are still further shown in his reference of "the benefit which it" (the flag, observe) "confers on mankind." His is a typical utterance: the vestigial idolatry of the cave-dweller and the sylvan nomad is still strong in the race, and flag-worship is one of its most reasonless manifestations. Everywhere and always in these days of war we hear and read words about the flag which a thinking human being would be ashamed to utter of an actual beneficent deity. There is no room whatever for doubt that what the average patriot acclaims and honors is the actual colored silk or bunting, not what it represents. To the conception of abstractions he comes unfitly equipped, but he can see a tinted rag. I do

not know that any harm comes of his fetishism; it is noted merely as an interesting and significant phenomenon—one of a thousand proving the brevity of our advance along the line of progress toward enlightenment. It is of a piece of the average human being's more or less sincere respect for truth, justice, chastity and so forth, not as practicable means to the end of human happiness, but as things creditable and desirable in themselves, even when subversive of their actual purpose by promoting misery.

Let the flag flap, and let "our ill-starred fellow citizens" who are unable to get a firm mental grasp on what it stands for knuckle down upon their knees before it and lift the voice. But, God bless them! how they would be shocked to observe the indifference with which it is regarded by soldiers in battle! One of the sharpest and most righteous rebukes I ever got from high authority was for permitting my color-sergeant to flaunt his gaudy symbol in the face of a battery. To civilian orators and poets the flag is sacred; to the intelligent soldier it is merely useful: it marks the battle line, preserves the unity of the regiment and "inspires" the soldier that is unintelligent.

A singularly disagreeable instance of fetishism is related of the Hon. William Jennings Bryan. While in Tokio, the story goes —among his admirers—he purchased a stool upon which Admiral Togo had sat at a Shinto ceremony. The story has it that the sale was reluctantly made, for the stool had been long a sacred object before it was newly consecrated by contact with the person of the renowned sailor; but the custodians did not feel at liberty to disappoint so illustrious an American as Mr. Bryan. On learning this, the great man magnanimously returned it and contented himself, as well as he could, with a common chair upon which Togo had sat in a restaurant.

It is disagreeable to think of Mr. Bryan in the character of a sycophantic souvenir hunter. It is disagreeable to think that even the humblest and obscurest American citizen can have so little self-respect. Anthropolatry is but a shade less base and barbarous than that other primitive religion, fetishism; and the two, as in this instance, are often in coexistence. No superstition seems ever wholly to die. Both these are rife and rampant in the civilization of to-day, and one can name, offhand, a dozen of their customary manifesta-

tions by persons who would be shocked by the revelation of their close relationship to the shagpate cave-dweller, the remoter *pithecanthropos erectus,* and, at the back of them both, the quadrumanal arborean with a vestigial swim-bladder.

DID WE EAT ONE ANOTHER?

THERE is no doubt of it. The unwelcome truth has been long suppressed by interested parties who find their account in playing sycophant to that self-satisfied tyrant Modern Man; but to the impartial philosopher it is as plain as the nose upon the elephant's face that our ancestors ate one another. The custom of the Fiji Islanders, which is their only stock-in-trade, their only claim to notoriety, is a relic of barbarism; but it is a relic of our barbarism.

Man is naturally a carnivorous animal. That none but green-grocers will dispute. That he was formerly less vegetarian in his diet than at present, is clear from the fact that market gardening increases in the ratio of civilization. So we may safely assume that at some remote period Man subsisted on an exclusively flesh diet. Our uniform vanity has given us the human mind as the acme of intelligence, the human face and figure as the standard of beauty. Of course we cannot deny to human fat and lean an equal superi-

ority over beef, mutton and pork. It is plain that our meat-eating ancestors would think in this way, and being unrestrained by the mawkish sentiment attendant on high civilization, would act habitually on the obvious suggestion. *A priori,* therefore, it is clear that we ate ourselves.

Philology is about the only thread that connects us with the prehistoric past. By picking up and piecing together the scattered remnants of language, we form a patchwork of wondrous design and significance. Consider the derivation of the word "sarcophagus," and see if it be not suggestive of potted meats. Observe the significance of the phrase "sweet sixteen." What a world of meaning lurks in the expression "she is as sweet as a peach," and how suggestive of luncheon are the words "tender youth." A kiss is but a modified bite, and a fond mother, when she says her babe is "almost good enough to eat," merely shows that she is herself only a trifle too good to eat it.

These evidences might be multiplied *ad infinitum;* but if enough has been said to induce one human being to revert to the diet of his forefathers the object of this essay is accomplished.

1868.

THE BACILLUS OF CRIME

FOR a number of years it has been known to all but a few ancient physicians—survivals from an exhausted régime—that all disease is caused by *bacilli,* which worm themselves into the organs that secrete health and enjoin them from the performance of that rite. The medical conservatives mentioned attempt to whittle away the value and significance of this theory by affirming its inadequacy to account for such disorders as broken heads, sunstroke, superfluous toes, home-sickness, burns and strangulation on the gallows; but against the testimony of so eminent bacteriologers as Drs. Koch and Pasteur their carping is as that of the impatient angler. The *bacillus* is not to be denied; he has brought his blankets and is here to stay until evicted. Doubtless we may confidently expect his eventual supersession by a fresher and more ingenious disturber of the physiological peace, but he is now chief among ten thousand evils and the one alto-

gether lovely, and it is futile to attempt to read him out of the party.

It follows that in order to deal intelligently with the criminal impulse in our afflicted fellow-citizens we must discover the *bacillus* of crime, which we now know is merely disease with another name. To that end we think that the bodies of hanged assassins and such patients of low degree as have been gathered to their fathers by the cares of public office or consumed by the rust of inactivity in prison should be handed over to a microscopical society for examination. The bore, too, offers a fine field for research, and might justly enough be examined alive. Whether there is one general—or as the ancient and honorable orders prefer to say, "grand"—*bacillus,* producing a general (or grand) criminal impulse generating a multitude of sins, or an infinite number of well defined and several *bacilli,* each inciting to a particular crime, is a question to the determination of which the most distinguished microscopist might be proud to devote the powers of his eye. If the latter is the case it will somewhat complicate the treatment, for clearly the patient afflicted with chronic assassination will require different medicines from those which might be effica-

cious in a gentleman suffering from constitutional theft or the desire to represent his district in Congress. But it is permitted to us to hope that all the crimes, like all the arts, are essentially one; that murder, commerce and respectability are but different symptoms of the same physical disorder, at the back of which is a microbe vincible to a single medicament, albeit the same awaits discovery.

In the fascinating theory of the unity of crime we may not unreasonably hope to find another evidence of the brotherhood of man, another spiritual bond tending to draw the several classes of society more closely together. If such should be the practical effect of the great truth something will have been gained, even if the discovery of a suitable medicine to restore our enemies to health be delayed until all too late to save them from rude and primitive treatment by the sheriff.

1893.

THE GAME OF BUTTON

AMONG the countless evils besetting us in our passage through this vale of tears "to where beyond these voices there is peace," the button holds a conspicuous place, and is apparently inaccessible to the spirit of reform. Less shocking than war, pestilence or famine, less destructive than the Dingley tariff and less irritating than the Indiana novel, it is thought by many observers to be, in the sum of its effects in reducing the gayety of nations, superior to any of these maleficent agencies, and by some to excel them all together. In the persistent currency of the story of the man who killed himself because of his weariness in buttoning and unbuttoning his clothes we have strong confirmatory testimony to the button's "natural magic and dire property on wholesome life." The story itself appears to be destitute of authentication, and but for its naturalness, its inherent credibility and the way that these bring it home to men's business and bosoms it would probably have had

as evanescent a vogue as the immortal works discovered weekly by the literary critics of the newspapers. As it is, this simple and touching tale will probably live as long as any language, possibly as long as the button itself. For the button is apparently immortal. It has struck root deeply into human conservatism—more deeply, I am constrained to admit, than it has, generally speaking, into the textile fabrics with which it is commonly but somewhat precariously connected.

That the button is in some sense a benefaction is not lightly to be denied. In its unostentatious way, and when it stays on, it does a good deal for the comfort of mankind, as, the police permitting, one may readily convince himself by walking a few blocks without its artful aid. Its splendid opportunities of usefulness, however, are the creations, not so much of our ingenuity, as of our limitations. If the human race had been born omniscient (in the tops of trees, as is thought to be held by the Darwinians) instead of achieving omniscience too lately to overcome the button habit, we should not have had the primitive appliance thrust upon us, for we should never have thrust ourselves into the tubular clothing which seems to require its ministrations.

Even in the endurance of that capital affliction we are not intelligently aided by the button. It badly serves a needless need and the common sense of the race cries out against it as clumsy, ugly, inefficient and frequently absent from duty at a critical moment which it has malevolently foreseen. It is better than nothing, doubtless, but when considered along with the hook-and-eye, for example, it breaks down at every point of the comparison. The tailor who, disregarding the mandates of conservatism and tradition, and filled with a divine compassion for his race, should rise to the great occasion and with one foot upon the sea and the other upon the land declare that buttons should be no more would accomplish an enduring fame and dispute with Washington and draw-poker the first place in the hearts of his countrymen. He would have only to replace the button, where it serves as a fastener, with some simple adaptation of the hook-and-eye, and where it exists as a mere survival (as for example at the back of a frock-coat, where it once assisted in supporting the sword-belt) put nothing at all, and the millions yet to be would rise up and call him blest.

I have preferred to consider this matter

with reference mainly to the woes and wants of the coarser sex, but the button is known to woman. With the charming superiority to reason which her detractors term perversity she prefers it on the left-hand side of her garments, but it dominates her life and poisons her peace none the less for that; albeit she offers herself the solace of turning it into an ornament more or less fearfully and wonderfully made.

In modern religious history women and buttons have a connection which is as singular as interesting. To the great movement which resulted in establishing Protestantism the name "Reformation" is not universally deemed appropriate, but there is one of his many aspects in which Martin Luther may be contemplated by all as a true reformer. Before his day women invariably used the hook-and-eye exclusively, which was well enough. Unfortunately, however, they had conceived the remarkable notion that this simple and useful appliance for joining together what man is not permitted to put asunder, would abate something of its efficacy if placed where reason would naturally suggest. All women's dresses were made to hook behind, and in being fastened required the services of another

person than the wearer. For this reason, and because God had made him so, Luther assailed the custom with all the fire and fierceness of his polemical nature. So long as women could not dress themselves without assistance, he argued, they must be slaves, and their spiritual natures must remain undeveloped until they should fasten their frocks in front. Calvin, on the contrary, found nothing in the Scriptures authorizing women to enter their clothing backward and set his face like a flint against the impious innovation. The contest between the disciples of these two mighty minds was waged with great bitterness, notwithstanding the efforts of the gentle Melancthon, who stood for peace and tried to part them in the middle, enacting, indeed, the role of Mr. Facing-both-ways. In the end Luther conquered. All good Protestant dames and maidens save those of his antagonist's immediate following adopted his views and eventually the Catholic ladies swung into line, too. But in some of the dark corners of Europe and America a vestige of the Calvinist influence survives, and ladies' gowns open behind like the chrysalis of a locust.

The one change entailed another; for many years—until, indeed, the button habit had be-

come invincible—it did not occur to any of the hair sex that the hook-and-eye could be used in front as well as surreptitiously behind the back. That truth has now penetrated the female mind and sometimes warms it into action: but for the most part lovely woman is infested with the parasitic button as badly as the male of her species, and of neither does it manifest a disposition to let go. It has usually its buttonhole to bear it company, and doubtless looks forward to a long season of domestic felicity and profound repose while engaged in the business of breaking up families and promoting breaches of the peace by sapping the foundation of temper, leveling the outworks of patience and desolating the whole domain of the Christian virtues.

SLEEP

IT is hardly a "burning question"; it is not even a "problem that presses for solution." Nevertheless, to minds not incurious as to the future it has a mild, pleasing interest, like that of the faintly heard beating of the bells of distant cows that will come in and demand attention later.

It by no means appears that sleep is a natural function, the necessity of which inheres in animal life and the constitution of things; there is reason to regard it as a phenomenon due rather to stress of circumstances—a kind of intermittent disorder incurred by exposure to conditions that are being slowly but surely removed. Precisely as sanitary and medical science and improved methods of living are gradually extending the length of human life in every civilized country and threatening the king of shadows himself with death ere, in the poet's sense, "Time shall throw a dart" at him, so we may observe already the initial stages of a successful campaign against his brother "Sleep." Civilized peoples sleep

fewer hours than savage ones, and, among the civilized, dwellers in cities fewer than country folk. The reason is not far to seek: it is a matter of light.

Primitive Man, like the savage of to-day, had at night no other light than that of the moon and that of wood fires. For countless ages our ancestors lived without candles, and when they had learned the trick of burning rushes soaked in the fat of neighboring tribesmen their state was not greatly better. Beyond Primitive Man we may dimly discern *his* ancestors—unmentionable to ears un-Darwinized—who had no artificial light at all. In the darkness of the night and the forest what could these ancient worthies do? They had little enough to do at any time, but even their rudest pursuit—that of one another—could not be carried on in darkness. They did nothing, naturally assuming the most comfortable posture in which to do it, the earlier sort suspending themselves by their tails, the later, having no tails, lying down as we do to-day, or rather to-night. It is a law of nature that when the body, or any organ of it, is inactive a kind of torpor ensues; the blood circulates in it with a more feeble flow; molecular changes take place with a lessened

energy—in short, the creature begins to die, and can be restored to full life only by renewal of bodily activity. In the instance of the brain this torpor means unconsciousness—that is to say, sleep. To put the matter briefly, darkness compels inaction, inaction begets sleep.

Another law of nature—a rather comical one—is that acts which we do regularly, from choice or necessity, set up a tendency in us to do them involuntarily when we don't care to; and when the original impulse has been replaced by this new and more imperative one we give it the name of habit and flatter ourselves that we have explained it. Because our pithecanthropoid and autocthonic forefathers, unable by reason of darkness to indulge during the whole twenty-four hours in the one-sided pleasures of the chase and the mutual joy of braining one another, had to sleep, *we* have to sleep; although we have (by paying sorely for it) plenty of light for many kinds of malign activity.

But little by little we are overcoming the sleep habit without loss of health, if not with positive sanitary advantage. As before pointed out, the people of our lighted cities sleep less than the rural population; and this

sleeps less than it did before the improvement in lamps. Nothing is more certain, despite popular opinion to the contrary, than that the men of cities are superior in strength and endurance to those of the country, as is abundantly attested in army life, in camp and field. That this is wholly or even greatly due to their nocturnal activity is not affirmed; only that their addiction to the joys of insomnia has not appreciably counteracted the sanitary advantages of city life—amongst which an honorable prominence should be given to defective drainage and drinking-water that is largely solution of dog and hydrate of husband from the city reservoir.

The electric light has apparently "come to stay," but more likely it will in good time be replaced by something that as far exceeds it as itself beats the hallowed tallow candle of our grandmothers. Not only will the streets and shops and dwellings of our cities be illuminated all night with a splendor of which we can have hardly a conception, but the country districts as well; for it is now known that plants (which apparently are not creatures of habit) do not need sleep, and that by continuous light the profits of agriculture could be enormously increased. The farmers

will no longer retire with the lark, but will work night shifts, as is already done in factories and mines, and eventually work all the time, in order to support the rest of us in the style to which we have been accustomed.

On the whole, I think it not unreasonable to look forward with pleasant anticipation to a time, some millions of years hence, when the literature of sleep will be no longer intelligible, and the people of even this country be sufficiently wide awake to prevent the ten *per centum* of their number devoted to patriotic pursuits from plundering the other ninety *per centum,* and to make our judges and legislators obey the laws.

CONCERNING PICTURES

I

I HOLD with Story and others whose talents and accomplishments so brilliantly illustrate their faith, that the great artist is almost necessarily a man of high attainments in general knowledge and in more than one branch of art. He who knows but one art knows none. The Muses do not singly disclose themselves; for the favor of one you must sue to all. Consider the great Italian painters, from Angelo and Rafael down the line of merit to the modern masters. As a rule they were men of wisdom, accomplished in all the learning of their time. They were statesmen, scientists, engineers—men of affairs. They knew literature, architecture, sculpture and music, as well as painting. With here and there a notable exception—more notable as an exception than as a painter—the same is true in many a country besides Italy, and many an age besides that in which the genius of her sons kindled the im-

perishable splendor that burns about her name.

Perception is not the same as discernment, and he who sees with his eyes only will paint with nothing but his hand. Ruskin says the artist is the man who knows "what is going on." To him the primrose is a primrose and something more—a primrose plus what it is doing, saying, thinking, and what is being done, said, thought by its whole environment. The great artist makes everything live; he gives to death itself and desolation a personality and a breathing soul. The rooted rock could move if it wished; trees understand one another; the river is prescient of the sea. Not a pebble, not a grass-blade but is alert with a significant life to further the general conspiracy.

Understand me. This activity is entirely distinct from muscular action, locomotion, motion of any kind or any of the coarser sorts of energy flagrantly depicted. The portrait of a corpse may be full of it, the picture of a bounding horse altogether destitute.

Everything in nature—every single object, every group, every landscape, has a visible expression, as a face has. This can generally be denoted in terms of human emotion. We

all know what is meant by an "angry" sky or a "threatening" billow, for we have observed what follows. But we are not all equally sensitive to the joyous aspect of a tree, the sulking of a rock, the menace or the benediction that may speak from a hillside, the reticence of one building and the garrulity of another, the pathos of a blank window, the tendernesses and the terrors that smile and glower everywhere about us. These are no fancies. True, they are but the outward and visible signs of an inner mood; but the objects that bear them beget the mood. No true artist but feels it, and all feel it nearly alike. To discern, to feel, to seize upon this dominant expression and make it predominant in his picture—this, as Taine rightly says, is the painter's function.

I stood once upon the slope of a deep gulch; with me a friend, the quick certainty of whose artistic insight was always to me a source of surprise and delight. Across the gulch, a quarter-mile away, stood two trees, a giant oak, whose great roots corded the rocks like the tentacles of a devil-fish, and a slender pine, springing from clear ground nearby. The oak reached out a long, muscular arm toward the other tree, which, leaning sharply

away from the contact, had all its branches on the opposite side. I studied the group for some minutes while my friend had her eyes and thoughts elsewhere. I was endeavoring to interpret the sentiment, which finally I succeeded in doing to my satisfaction; it remained only to test the validity of my conclusion. I said to myself: "Menace and terror"; to my companion: "What is the matter over yonder?" She glanced at the group and replied, without an instant's hesitation, in the first words that came to call: "The little tree is trying to get away from the old scoundrel among the rocks."

II

The terrible story is told of how the late W. H. Vanderbilt came near being cheated out of three hundred thousand dollars by purchasing a painting that was no better than it looked! From that imminent peril he was rescued by death. The painting, it seems, was discovered (where it had not been lost) by a person—nay, a parson—named Nicole, who gave his personal assurance that it was a Rafael. It must have looked a good deal like a Rafael, for although it was for a long

time an object of adoration for artist pilgrims from all over Europe, none detected its spurious character. That is clear from the facts that it was later that Mr. Vanderbilt agreed to take it, and that while negotiations were going on Herr Nicole borrowed twelve thousand dollars on it from a banker who has it yet. That could hardly have been true if the pilgrims to its shrine at Lausanne had had their transports moderated by a suspicion that it was not so good as it looked.

The reader will kindly repress his hilarity. This is no joke. If a picture can not be better than it looks how does it happen that this one is not so valuable after the exposure as it was before? The notion that a picture *can* be better or worse than it looks does seem absurd when one stops to think about it. It is not original with me; the late Bill Nye once set the country smiling by solemnly explaining that he had been told that Wagner's music was better than it sounded.

But why did we laugh? We do not laugh when a wealthy "patron of art," or a paternal government pays an enormous price for a painting *because* it is pronounced by experts to be a genuine work of a famous "old master." And we do not laugh—not all of us—

when, as in the present instance, the value drops to nearly nothing because the painting proves to be a copy only, or the work of an unknown hand.

I am no artist—Heaven forbid!—nor even a connoisseur. If I were I should doubtless understand why a copy that is as beautiful as an original is not so desirable a possession—why it does not give so great pleasure to the eye and the mind and the heart. I should understand why the work of an obscure or unknown artist is not so valuable as the work of a famous artist if it happens to be as good.

One would suppose—that is, one unacquainted with art might be conceived as supposing—that the value of a painting would be appraised without reference to the question: Who made it? It seems (to the unenlightened) as if it would make no difference what name was borne by the person that painted it—just as the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* would be equally pleasing whether written by Homer or by "another man of the same name," or another name. I have the hardihood to declare that it is—and here I am on my own ground. I affirm—nay, "swear tiptoed with lifted hand"—that the pleasure of any reasonable man in reading "Ossian" is

not abated by knowledge that the author was Macpherson; that to a sane judgment the "Rowley" poems are altogether as delightful as if the secret of their composition had been carried into the next world by little Chatterton when "he perished in his pride." What is it to me, or to you, if the Shakspeare plays were written by Bacon? We have the plays; let us read and be thankful. Shakspeare and Bacon may fight it out in Elysium, with Ignatius Donnelly as umpire; of the decision, "it boots not to inquire."

If that is the mental attitude of the true lover of letters, and it is, why is the true lover of art differently constituted, if he is? Why are "the still vexed Bermoothes" of his soul still vexed? Why can not he make up his mind that a work of art is good, or is bad, and let it go at that, serenely unconcerned about the "irrelevant, incompetent and immaterial" babble of the experts in authenticity?

Being ignorant, I thank Heaven for the existence of artists obscure by fortune or by choice, skilful enough to imitate in line or style the work of the great and famous painters. For gratification of my own eye I would as lief see and possess their work as the work that they imitate. So would anybody—for

gratification of his own eye. For pigly satisfaction of owning something denied to one's neighbor; something rare because death has stopped the supply; something to be triumphantly shown to one's visitors in the hope of exciting some of the baser passions of the human heart, such as covetousness, envy and the like—for such "satisfaction and refined delight" one would of course prefer an original "old master" and be willing to pay a pretty penny for gratification of the preference.

Some wicked man has said that an artist has sensibility, but no sense. I fancy that is not so, but finding artists pretty generally concerned with questions of the "genuineness" of "canvases"—that is to say, pretty generally assenting to the proposition that a picture can be better or worse than it looks—I am sometimes tormented by doubt.

MODERN WARFARE

I

THE dream of a time when the nations shall war no more is a pleasant dream, and an ancient. Countless generations have indulged it, and to countless others, doubtless, it will prove a solace and a benefaction. Yet one may be permitted to doubt if its ultimate realization is to be accomplished by diligent and general application to the task of learning war, as so many worthy folk believe. That every notable advance in the art of destroying human life should be "hailed" by these good people as a step in the direction of universal peace must be accounted a phenomenon entirely creditable to the hearts, if not to the heads, of those in whom it is manifest. It shows in them a constitution of mind opposed to bloodshed, for their belief having nothing to do with the facts—being, indeed, inconsistent with them—is obviously an inspiration of the will.

"War," these excellent persons reason, "will at last become so dreadful that men will no longer engage in it"—happily unconscious of the fact that men's sense of their power to make it dreadful is precisely the thing which most encourages them to wage it. Another popular promise of peace is seen in the enormous cost of modern armaments and military methods. The shot and cartridge of a heavy gun of to-day cost hundreds of dollars, the gun itself tens of thousands. It is at an expense of thousands that a torpedo is discharged, which may or may not wreck a ship worth millions. To secure its safety from the machinations of its wicked neighbors while itself engaged in the arts of peace, a nation of to-day must have an immense sum of money invested in military plant alone. It is not of the nature of man to impoverish himself by investments from which he hopes for no return except security in the condition entailed by the outlay. Men do not construct expensive machinery, taxing themselves poor to keep it in working order, without ultimately setting it going. The more of its income a nation has to spend in preparation for war, the more certainly it will go to war. Its means of defense are means of aggression, and the

stronger it feels itself to strike for its altars and its fires, the more spirited becomes its desire to go across the border to upset the altars and extinguish the fires of its neighbors.

But the notion that improved weapons give modern armies and navies an increased killing ability—that the warfare of the future will be a bloodier business than that which we have the happiness to know—is an error which the observant lover of peace is denied the satisfaction of entertaining. Compare, for example, a naval engagement of to-day with Salamis, Lepanto or Trafalgar. Compare the famous duel between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac* with almost any encounter between the old wooden line-of-battle ships, continued, as was the reprehensible custom, until one or both, with hundreds of dead and wounded, incarnadined the seas by going to the bottom.

As long ago as 1861 a terrific engagement occurred in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. It lasted forty hours, and was fought with hundreds of the biggest and best guns of the period. Not a man was killed nor wounded.

In the spring of 1862, below New Orleans, Porter's mortar boats bombarded Fort Jack-

son for nearly five days and nights, throwing about 16,800 shells, mostly thirteen inches in diameter. "Nearly every shell," says the commandant of the fort, "lodged inside the works." Even in those days, it will be observed, there were "arms of precision"; and an exploding 13-inch shell is still highly esteemed and respected. As nearly as I can learn, the slaughter amounted to two men.

A year later Admiral Dupont attacked Fort Sumter, then in the hands of the Confederates, with the *New Ironsides,* the double-turret monitor *Keokuk,* and seven single-turret monitors. The big guns of the fort were too much for him. One of his vessels was struck 90 times, and afterward sank. Another was struck 53 times; another, 35 times; another, 14; another, 47; another, 20; another, 47; another, 95; another 36, and disabled. But they threw 151 shots from their own "destructive" weapons, and these, being "arms of precision," killed a whole man by cutting down a flag-staff, which fell upon him. The total number of shots fired by the enemy was 2,209, and if more than two men were killed by them I am unable to find any account of it. But it was a splendid battle, as every Quaker will allow!

In the stubbornest land engagements of our great rebellion, and of the later and more scientific Franco-German and Turko-Russian wars, the proportionate mortality was not nearly so great as in those where "Greek met Greek" hand to hand, or where the Roman with his short sword, the most destructive weapon ever invented, played at give and take with the naked barbarian or the Roman of another political faith. True, we must make some allowance for exaggeration in the accounts of these ancient affairs, not forgetting Niebuhr's assurance that Roman history is nine parts lying. But as European and American history run it pretty hard in respect of that, something, too, may be allowed in accounts of modern battles—particularly where the historian foots up the losses of the side which had not the military advantage of his sympathies.

Improvements in guns, armor, fortification and shipbuilding have been pushed so near to perfection that naval and semi-naval engagements may justly be counted amongst the arts of peace, and must eventually obtain the medical recognition which is their due as means of sanitation. The most notable improvements are those in small arms. Our

young scapegrace grandfathers fought the Revolutionary War with so miserable fire-arms that they could not make themselves decently objectionable to the minions of monarchy at a greater distance than forty yards. They had to go up so close that many of them lost their tempers. With the modern rifle, incivilities can be carried on at a distance of a mile-and-a-half, with thin lines and a cheerful disposition. The dynamite shell has, unfortunately, done much to gloom this sunniness by suggesting a scattered formation, which makes conversation difficult and begets loneliness. Isolation leads to suicide, and suicide is "mortality." So the dynamite shell is really not the life-saving device that it looks. But on the whole we seem to be making reasonably good progress toward that happy time, not when "war shall be no more," but when, being healthful, it will be universal and perpetual. The soldier of the future will die of age; and may God have mercy on his cowardly soul!

It has been said that to kill a man in battle a man's weight in lead is required. But if the battle happens to be fought by modern warships or forts, or both, about a hundred tons of iron would seem to be a reasonable

allowance for the making of a military corpse. In fighting in the open the figures are more cheering. What it cost in our civil war to kill a Confederate soldier is not accurately computable; we don't know exactly how many we had the good luck to kill. But the "best estimates" are easily accessible.

II

In the *Century* magazine several years ago was a paper on machine guns and dynamite guns. As might have been expected, it opened with a prediction by a distinguished general of the Union armies that, so murderous have warlike weapons become, "the next war will be marked by terrific and fearful slaughter." This is naturally followed by the writer's smug and comfortable assurance that "in the extreme mortality of modern war will be found the only hope that man can have of even a partial cessation of war." If this were so, let us see how it would work. The chronological sequence of events would necessarily (obviously, one would think) be something like this:

1. Murderous perfection of warlike weapons.

2. War marked by "terrific and fearful slaughter."

3. Consequent cessation of war and disarmament of nations.

4. Stoppage of the manufacture of military weapons, with resulting decay of dependent industries; that is to say, decay of the ability to produce the weapons. Diversion of intellectual activity to arts of peace.

5. War no longer capable of being marked by "terrific and fearful slaughter." *Ergo,*

6. Revival of war.

All the armies and navies of the world are being equipped with more and more "destructive" weapons. But does this insure a "terrific and fearful slaughter" in battle? Assuredly not. It implies and necessitates profound modifications in tactical formations and movements—modifications similar in kind (though greater in degree) to those already brought about by the long range repeating rifle and the improved field artillery. Men are not going to march up in masses and be mown down by machinery. If the effective range of these guns is, for example, two miles, tactical maneuvers in the open will be made at a greater distance from them. The storming of fortifications and charges in the open ground will go out of fashion. They have, in fact, been growing more and more infrequent ever since the improvements in range

and precision of firearms began. If a man who fought under John Sobieski, Marlborough or the first Napoleon could be haled out of his obliterated grave and shown a battle of to-day with all our murderous weapons in full thunder, he would probably knuckle the leaf-mould out of his eyes and say: "Yes, yes, it is most inspiring!—but where is the enemy?"

It is a fact that in the battle of to-day the soldier seldom gets more than a distant and transitory glimpse of the men whom he is fighting. He is still supplied with the sabre if he is "horse," with the bayonet if he is "foot," but the value of these weapons is a moral one. When commanded to draw the one or "fix" the other he knows he is expected to advance as far as he dares to go; but he knows, too, if he is not a very raw recruit, that he will not get within sabring or bayoneting distance of his antagonists—who will either break and run away or drop so many of his comrades that he will himself break and run away. In our civil war—and that is very ancient history to the long-range tactician of to-day—it was my fortune to assist at a sufficing number of assaults with bayonet and assaults with sabre, but I have never had

the gratification to see a half-dozen men, friends or enemies, who had fallen by either the one weapon or the other. Whenever the opposing lines actually met it was the rifle, the carbine, or the revolver that did the work. In these days of "arms of precision" they do not meet. There is reason, too, to suspect that, therefore, they do not "get mad" and execute all the mischief that they are capable of. It is certain that the machine gun will keep its temper under the severest provocation.

Another great improvement in warfare is a mirror or screen which is placed at the rear of heavy guns, reflecting everything in front. By means of certain mechanism the gun can be trained upon anything so reflected. This enables the gunners to keep out of danger in the bottom of their well and so live to a green old age. The advantage to them is considerable and too obvious to require exposition to anyone but an agnostic; but whether in the long run their country will find any profit in preserving the lives of men who are afraid to die for it—that is another matter. It might be better to incur the expense entailed by having relays of men to be killed in battle than to try to win battles with men who know

nothing of the spirit, enthusiasm and heroism that come of peril.

All mechanical devices tend to make cowards of those whom they protect. Men long accustomed to the security of even such slight earthworks as are thrown up by armies operating against each other in the open country lose something out of their general efficiency. The particular thing that they lose is courage. In long sieges the sallies and assaults are commonly feeble, spiritless affairs, easily repelled. So manifestly does a soldier's comparative safety indispose him to incur even such perils as beset him in it that during the last years of our civil war, when it was customary for armies in the field to cover their fronts with breastworks, many intelligent officers, conceding the need of some protection, yet made their works much slighter than was easily possible. Except when the firing was heavy, close and continuous, "head-logs" (for example) for the men to fire under were distinctly demoralizing. The soldier who has least security is least reluctant to forego what security he has. That is to say, he is the bravest.

Right sensibly General Miles once tried to call a halt in the progress of military extrav-

agance by condemning our enormous expenditures for "disappearing guns." The delicate and complicated mechanism for pointing and lowering the gun will break down when it is in action and deteriorate like a fish on the beach when it is not. During the long decades of peace it will need expert attention, exercise enough to wear it out, and constant renewal of its parts. The only merit of these absurd Jack-in-the-box guns is their bankrupting cost. If we can fool less wealthy nations into adopting them we shall have whatever advantage accrues to the longest purse in a contest of purses. So far, all other nations, rich and poor alike, have shown a thrifty indisposition to engage in the peaceful strife.

We are told with, on the whole, sufficient reiteration, that this is an age and this a country of "marvelous invention," of "scientific machinery," and the rest of it. We accept the statement without question, as the people of every former age have without question believed it of themselves. God forbid that anyone should close his ears to the cackle of his generation when it has laid its daily egg! Nevertheless, there are things that mechanical ingenuity can not profitably produce. One

of them is the disappearing gun, another the combination stop-watch and tack hammer.

Americans must learn, preferably in time of peace, that no people has a monopoly of ingenuity and military aptitude. Great wars of the future, like great wars of the past, will be conducted with an intelligence and knowledge common to both belligerents, and with such appliances as both possess. The art of attack and the art of defense will balance each other as now, any advance in the first being always promptly met with a corresponding advance in the second. Genius is of no country; it is not peculiar to the United States.

It is not to be doubted that if it should be discovered that silver is a better gun metal than any now in use, and some ingenious scoundrel should invent a diamond-pointed shell of superior penetrating power, these "weapons of precision and efficiency" would be adopted by all the military powers. Their use would at least produce a gratifying mortality among civilians who pay military appropriations; so something would be gained. The purpose of modern artillery appears to be slaughter of the taxpayer behind the gun.

If fifty years ago the leading nations of

Europe and America had united in making invention of offensive and defensive devices a capital crime, they would during all this intervening time have been on relatively the same military footing that they now are, and would have been spared an expenditure of a mountain of money. In the mad competition for primacy in war power not one of them has gained any permanent advantage; the entire benefit of the "improvements" has gone to the clever persons who have thought them out and been permitted to patent them. Until these are forbidden by law to eat cake in the sweat of the taxpayer's face we must continue to clutch our purse and tremble at their power. We are willing to admire their ingenuity, cheer their patriotism and envy their lack of heart, but it would be better to take them from their arms of precision to those of the public hangman.

The military inventor is said now to have thought out a missile that will make a hole in any practicable armor plate as easily as you can put a hot knife through a pat of butter. From all that can be learned by way of the fan-light over the door of official secrecy it appears to be a pointed steel bolt greased with graphite. Its performances are said to be

eminently satisfactory to the man behind the patent, who is confident that it will serve the purpose of its being by penetrating the United States Treasury. Well, here at least is "an improvement in weapons of destruction," to which the non-militant taxpayer can accord a hearty welcome. If it is really irresistible to armor, armor to resist it will go out of use and ships again "fight in their shirtsleeves." It will sadden us to renounce the familiar 550-dollars-a-ton steel plating endeared to us by a thousand tender recollections of the assessment rate, but time heals all earthly sorrow, and eventually we shall renew our joy in the blue of the skies, the fragrance of the flowers, the dew-spangled meadows, the fluting and warbling and trilling of the politicians. In the meantime, while awaiting our perfect consolation, we may derive a minor comfort from the high price of graphite.

When in personal collision, or imminent expectation of it, with a gentleman cherishing the view that one is needless, one's attention does not wander from the business in hand to dwell upon the lilies and languors of peace. One is interested in the proceedings, and if he survive them experiences in the retrospection a pleasure that was not discernible in the re-

turning brave from the land where the Mauser and the Kraag-Jorgensen conversed amicably without visible human agency across a space of two statute miles. Crouching in the grass, under an afflicting Spanish fire from somewhere, our soldiers at San Juan Hill felt it a great hardship to be "decimated" in so inglorious a skirmish. They did not know, poor fellows, that they were fighting a typical modern battle. When, the situation having become intolerable, their two divisions had charged and carried the trenches of the two or three hundred Spaniards opposed to them, they had leisure to amend their conception of war as a picturesque and glorious game.

In the elder day, before the invention of the Whitehead torpedo and the high-power gun, the wooden war vessels of the period used to ram each other, lie alongside, grapple, jam their guns into each other's ports, and send swarms of half-naked boarders on each other's deck, where they fought breast to breast and foot to foot like heroes. Dr. Johnson described a sea voyage as "close confinement with a chance of being drowned." The sailor-militant has always experienced that double disadvantage with the added chance of being smashed and burned. But formerly

the rigors of his lot were ameliorated by a sight of his enemy and by some small opportunity of distinction in the neighborhood of that gentleman's throat. To-day he is denied the pleasure of meeting him—never even so much as sees him unless fortunate enough to make him take to his boats. As opportunity for personal adventure and distinction a modern sea-fight is considerably inferior to a day in the penitentiary. Like a land-fight, it has enough of danger to keep the men awake, but for variety and excitement it is inferior to a combat between an isosceles triangle and the fourth dimension.

When the patriot's heart is duly fired by his newspaper and his politician he will probably enlist henceforth, as he has done heretofore, and be as ready to assist in covering the enemy's half of the landscape with a rain of bullets, falling where it shall please Heaven, as his bellicose ancestor was to meet the foeman in the flesh and engage him in personal combat; but it will be a stupid business, despite all that the special correspondent can do for its celebration by verbal fireworks. Tales of the "firing line" emanating from the chimney corner of the future will urge the young male afield with a weaker

suasion. By the way, I do not remember to have heard the term "firing line" during our civil war. We had the thing, of course, but it did not last long enough (except in siege operations, when it was called something else) to get a name. Troops on the "firing line" either held their fire until the enemy signified a desire for it by coming to get it, or they themselves advanced and served him with it where he stood.

I should not like to say that this is an age of human cowardice; I say only that the men of all civilized nations are taking a deal of pains to invent offensive weapons that will wield themselves and defenses that can take the place of the human breast. A modern battle is a quarrel of skulkers trying to have all the killing done a long way from their persons. They will attack at a distance; they will defend if inaccessible. As much of the fighting as possible is done by machinery, preferably automatic. When we shall so have perfected our arms of precision and other destructive weapons that they will need no human agency to start and keep them going, war will be foremost among the arts of peace.

Meantime it is still a trifle perilous, sometimes fatal; those who practice it must expect

bloody noses and cracked crowns. It may be to the advantage of our countrymen to know that if they have no forethought but thrift they can have no safety but peace; that in the school of emergency nothing is taught but how to weep; that there are no effective substitutes for courage and devotion. America's best defenses are the breasts of American soldiers and the brains of American commanders. Confidence in any "revolutionizing" device is a fatal faith.

1899.

CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR

IN our manner of observing Christmas there is much, no doubt, that is absurd. Christmas is to some extent a day of meaningless ceremonies, false sentiment and hollow compliments endlessly iterated and misapplied. The observances "appropriate to the day" had, many of them, their origin in an age with which our own has little in common and in countries whose social and religious characteristics were unlike those obtaining here. As in so many other matters, America has in this been content to take her heritage without inquiry and without alteration, sacredly preserving much that once had a meaning now lost, much that is now an anachronism, a mere "survival." Even to the Christmas vocabulary we have added little. St. Nicholas himself, the patron saint of deceived children, still masquerades under the Spanish feminine title of "Santa" and the German nickname of "Claus." The back of our American coal grate is still idealized as a "yule log," and the English "holly"

is supposed in most cases fitly to be shadowed forth by a cedar bough, while a comparatively innocuous but equally inedible indigenous comestible figures as the fatal English "plum pudding." Nearly all our Christmas literature is, *longo intervallo,* European in spirit and Dickensish in form. In short, we have Christmas merely because we were in the line of succession. We have taken it as it was transmitted, and we try to make the worst of it.

The approach of the season is apparent in the manner of the friend or relative whose orbs furtively explore your own, seeking a sign of what you are going to give him; in the irrepressible solicitations of babes and cloutlings; in wild cascades of such literature as *Greenleaf on Evidence, for Boys* ("Boot-Leg" series), *The Little Girls' Illustrated Differential Calculus* and *Aunt Hetty's Rabelais,* in words of one syllable. Most clearly is the advent of the blessed anniversary manifest in maddening iteration of the greeting wherein, with a precision that never by any chance mistakes its adjective, you are wished a "merry" Christmas by the same person who a week later will be making ninety-nine "happies" out of a possible hun-

dred in New Year greetings similarly insincere and similarly insufferable. It is unknown to me why a Christmas should be always merry but never happy, and why the happiness appropriate to the New Year should not be expressed in merriment. These be mysteries in whose penetration abundance of human stupidity might be disclosed. By the time that one has been wished a "merry Christmas" or a "happy New Year" some scores of times in the course of a morning walk, by persons who he knows care nothing about either his merriment or his happiness, he is disposed, if he is a person of right feeling, to take a pessimist view of the "compliments of the season" and of the season of compliments. He cherishes, according to disposition, a bitter animosity or a tolerant contempt toward his race. He relinquishes for another year his hope of meeting some day a brilliant genius or inspired idiot who will have the intrepidity to vary the adjective and wish him a "happy Christmas" or a "merry New Year"; or with an even more captivating originality, keep his mouth shut.

As to the sum of sincerity and genuine good will that utters itself in making and accepting gifts (the other distinctive feature of holi-

day time) statistics, unhappily, are wanting and estimates untrustworthy. It may reasonably be assumed that the custom, though largely a survival—gifts having originally been given in a propitiatory way by the weak to the powerful—is something more; the present of a goggle-eyed doll from a man six feet high to a baby twenty-nine inches long not being lucidly explainable by assumption of an interested motive.

To the children the day is delightful and instructive. It enables them to see their elders in all the various stages of interesting idiocy, and teaches them by means of the Santa Claus deception that exceedingly hard liars may be good mothers and fathers and miscellaneous relatives—thus habituating the infant mind to charitable judgment and establishing an elastic standard of truth that will be useful in their later life.

The annual recurrence of the "carnival of crime" at Christmas has been variously accounted for by different authorities. By some it is supposed to be a providential dispensation intended to heighten the holiday joys of those who are fortunate enough to escape with their lives. Others attribute it to the lax morality consequent upon the demand for

presents, and still others to the remorse inspired by consciousness of ruinous purchases. It is affirmed by some that persons deliberately and with malice aforethought put themselves in the way of being killed, in order to avert the tiresome iteration of Christmas greetings. If this is correct, the annual Christmas "holocaust" is not an evil demanding abatement, but a blessing to be received in a spirit of devout and pious gratitude.

When the earth in its eternal circumgression arrives at the point where it was at the same time the year before, the sentimentalist whom Christmas has not exhausted of his essence squeezes out his pitiful dreg of emotion to baptize the New Year withal. He dusts and polishes his aspirations, and reërects his resolve, extracting these well-worn properties from the cobwebby corners of his moral lumber-room, whither they were relegated three hundred and sixty-four days before. He "swears off." In short, he sets the centuries at defiance, breaks the sequence of cause and effect, repeals the laws of nature and makes himself a new disposition from a bit of nothing left over at the creation of the universe. He can not add an inch to his stature, but thinks he can add a virtue to his charac-

ter. He can not shed his nails, but believes he can renounce his vices. Unable to eradicate a freckle from his skin, he is confident he can decree a habit out of his conduct. An improvident friend of mine writes upon his mirror with a bit of soap the cabalistic word, AFAHMASP. This is the *fiat lux* to create the shining virtue of thrift, for it means, A Fool And His Money Are Soon Parted. What need have we of morality's countless ministries; the complicated machinery of the church; recurrent suasions of precept and unceasing counsel of example; pursuing din of homily; still, small voice of solicitude and inaudible argument of surroundings—if one may make of himself what he will with a mirror and a bit of soap? But (it may be urged) if one can not reform himself, how can he reform others? Dear reader, let us have a frank understanding. He can not.

The practice of inflating the midnight steam-shrieker and belaboring the nocturnal ding-dong to frighten the encroaching New Year is obviously ineffectual, and might profitably be discontinued. It is no whit more sensible and dignified than the custom of savages who beat their sounding dogs to scare away an eclipse. If one elect to live with

barbarians, one must endure the barbarous noises of their barbarous superstitions, but the disagreeable simpleton who sits up till midnight to ring a bell or fire a gun because the earth has arrived at a given point in its orbit should nevertheless be deprecated as an enemy to his race. He is a sore trial to the feelings, an affliction almost too sharp for endurance. If he and his sentimental abettors might be melted and cast into a great bell, every right-minded man would derive an innocent delight from pounding it, not only on January first but all the year long.

ON PUTTING ONE'S HEAD INTO ONE'S BELLY

MR. HENRY HOLT, a publisher, has uttered his mind at no inconsiderable length in deprecation of what he calls "the commercialization of literature." That literature, in this country and England at least, has somewhat fallen from its high estate and is regarded even by many of its purveyors as a mere trade is unfortunately true, as we see in the genesis and development of the "literary syndicates"; in the unholy alliance between the book reviewer and the head of the advertising department; in the systematic "booming" of certain books and authors by methods, both supertabular and submanual, not materially different from those used for the promotion of a patent medicine; in the reverent attitude of editors and publishers toward authors of "best sellers," and in more things than can be here set down. In the last century when, surely by no fortuitous happening, American literature was made by such men as

Irving, Cooper, Bryant, Poe, Emerson, Whittier, Hawthorne, Longfellow, Holmes and Lowell, these purely commercial phenomena were in less conspicuous evidence and some of them were altogether indiscernible.

That the period of literature's commercialization should be that of its decay is obviously more than a coincidence. Mr. Holt observes both, and is sad, but *that* is a coincidence pure and simple: his melancholy is due to something else. The "commercialization" is confessedly compelling him to do a good deal more advertising than he likes to pay for; for commerce spells competition. The authors of to-day and their agents have acquired the disagreeable habit of taking their wares to the highest bidder—the publisher who will give the highest royalties and the broadest publicity. The immemorial relation whereby the publisher was said to drink wine out of the author's skull has been rudely disturbed by the latter demanding some of the wine for himself and refusing to supply the skull—an irritating infraction of a good understanding sanctified by centuries of faithful observance. It is only natural that Mr. Holt, being a conservative man and a protagonist of established order, should experience some of the emotions

appropriate to the defenders in a servile insurrection.

With a candor that is most becoming, Mr. Holt expressly bewails the passing of the old régime—the departed days when authors "had other resources" than authorship. This is the second time that it has been my melancholy privilege to hear the head of a prosperous American publishing house make this moan. Another one, a few years ago, in addressing a company of authors, solemnly advised them to have some means of support additional to writing. I was not then, and am not now, assured that publishers find it necessary to have any means of support additional to publishing.

THE AMERICAN CHAIR

A LONDON philosopher was once pleased to remark that the American habit of sitting on the middle of the back with the feet elevated might in time profoundly alter the American physical structure, producing a race having its type in the Bactrian camel. If "our cousins across the water" understood this matter they would not adopt the flippant tone toward us that they now do, but in place of ridicule would bestow compassion. Before endeavoring to clear away the misconceptions surrounding the subject, so as to let in upon ourselves the holy light of British sympathy I must explain that the practice of sitting in the manner which the British philosopher somewhat inaccurately describes is confined mostly to the males of our race; the American woman will not, I trust, partake of the structural modification foreseen by the scientific eye, but remain, as now, simply and sweetly dromedarian. True, Nature may punish her

for being found in bad company, but at the first stroke of the lash she will doubtless forsake us and seek sanctuary in the companionship of that bolt-upright vertebrate, the English nobleman.

The national peculiarity which, one is sorry to observe, provokes nothing but levity in the British mind—and British levity is no light affliction—is not our fault but our misfortune. Like every other people, we Americans are the slaves of those who serve us. Not one of us in a thousand (so busy are we in "subduing the wilderness" and guarding our homes against the Redskins) has leisure to plan and order his surroundings; and to the few whom Fortune has favored with leisure she has denied the means. We take everything ready-made—our houses, grounds, carriages, furniture and all. In some of these things Providence has by special interposition introduced new designs and revived old ones, but in most of them there is neither change nor the shadow of turning. They are to-day what they were a century ago, and a century hence will be what they are to-day. The chair-maker, for example, is the obscure intelligence and indirigible energy that his grandfather was before him: the American chair main-

tains through the ages its bad eminence as an instrument of torture. Time can not wither nor custom stale its infinite malevolence. The type of the species is the familiar hard-pan chair of the kitchen; in the dining-room this has been deplaced by the "splint-bottom," and in the parlor by an armed and upholstered abomination which tempts us to session only to turn to ashes, as it were, upon our bodies. They are essentially the same old chair—worthy descendants of the original Adam of Chairs, created from a block in the image of its maker's head. The American chair is never made to measure; it is supposed to fit anybody and be universally applicable.

It is to the American chair that we must look for the genesis and rationale of the American practice of shelving the American feet on the most convenient dizzy eminence. We naturally desire as little contact with the chair as possible, so we touch it with the acutest angle that we are able to achieve. The feet must rest somewhere, and a place must be found for them. It is admitted that the mantel, the sideboard, the window-sill, the *escritoire* and the dining table (at least during meals) are not good places; but *que voulez vous?*—the chairmakers have not

chosen to invent anything to mitigate the bitterness of the situation as by their genius for evil they have made it.

I humbly submit that in all this there is nothing deserving of ridicule. It is a situation with a pathos of its own, which ought to appeal strongly to a people suffering so many of the ills of conservitude, as do the English. It is all very well (to use their own pet locution) to ask why we do not abolish the American chair, but really the question ought not to come from a nation that endures *Mr. Punch,* pities the House of Lords and embraces that of Hanover. The American chair was probably divinely designed and sent upon us for the chastening of our national spirit, and we accept it with the same reverent submission that distinguishes our English critic in bowing his neck to the heavy yoke of his own humor.

ANOTHER "COLD SPELL"

THE late Professor Hayden, a distinguished official of the Coast Survey, held disquieting views regarding the significance of certain seismic and meteorological phenomena, or, as they say in English, earthquakes and storms. It is the professor's notion that stupendous changes are going on in the center of the earth. As the human race does not live in that locality, it may be thought that these changes are insufficiently important to engage the attention of the public press. Unfortunately, we are not permitted to entertain that pleasing illusion, for the learned scientist has traced an obscurely marked, but indubitable connection between them and the "blizzards" and cyclones of the Northwest. In a manner not clearly explained, the "central changes" of which the earthquake is the outward and visible sign, beget also "a nipping and an eager air" singularly distasteful to the Montana cattle-grower, and afflict Dakota with

that kind of zephyr which, as a nameless humorist has averred, "just sits on its hind legs and howls." Here, again, we are denied the double gratification of seeing the Northwestern States and Territories devastated and feeling ourselves secure from the same mischance. Professor Hayden—whose good will is unquestionable—had no hope of confining these frigorific activities to the region of their birth and overcoming them by some scientific *coup de main,* as the man beat the gout by herding it into his great toe, then cutting off the toe. No; the "blizzard," both still and sparkling, will spread all over the globe with increasing intensity and vehemence, to the no small discomfort of the unacclimated, though greatly, no doubt, to the innocent glee of Esquimau, Innuit, Aleut and other natives of those "thrilling regions"

> Where the playful Polar bear
> Nips the hunter unaware.

In short, as the professor puts it, "scientific men here and abroad concur in the opinion that we are approaching an extremely interesting period."

We are not left in doubt as to the precise nature of the disasters which an "interesting period" may naturally be expected to entail; it is strongly intimated that the period is to be "another glacial age." The one with which we were last favored, not longer ago, according to some authorities, than a matter of twenty thousand years, appears to have accomplished its purposes of erosion and extinction imperfectly. Its vast layers of ice, moving from the Pole toward the Equator, planed off the surface of the earth so badly that such asperities as the Rocky Mountains, the Alps and the Himalayas may be supposed to offend the mechanical eye of Nature and make her desirous to go over them again. The fact that the now temperate and torrid zones are still infested by men and other beasts is evidence that the cave-dwellers of the pre-glacial age were a tougher lot than the good old dame had supposed. In her next attempt she will probably pile on more ice and give it a superior momentum, at the same time heralding its southward encroachment with a temperature that will be such a terror as to turn the citrus belt white in a single night and drive it out altogether.

Having been encouraged by Professor Hayden to nourish anticipations of an interesting period pregnant with such pleasing possibilities as these, we are inexpressibly disappointed to have him say, as he does, that the operation of the great "central changes" to which we are to be indebted for all this is so slow that it may be a thousand years, or even longer, before they get to their work with perceptible efficacy. Of course one must recognize the stern necessity that dominates the scientific prophet—he has to carry the fulfilment so far into the future as to avoid the melancholy fate of short-range prophets, like Zadkiel; and therein we discern the true difference between the scientist and the impostor.

Nevertheless, in a matter of such pith and moment it would have been agreeable to be permitted to hope that these fascinating events would begin to occur in our day, and their author (if one may reverently venture to call him so) would have done a graceful thing if he had so far departed from the strictly scientific method as to assure us that some of us, at least, might reasonably expect to be frozen into the advancing wall of ice, like the famous Siberian mastodon of blessed memory, and become objects of interest to the possible

Haydens of a later dispensation. As he has denied us the gratification which he could so cheaply have given to our curiosity and ambition, one feels justified in denouncing him as a miscreant and a viper.

THE LOVE OF COUNTY

HISTORIANS, homilists, orators, poets and magazine poets have for ages been justly extolling the love of country as one of the noblest of human sentiments; and it has been officially recommended to the fair members of the Women's Press Association as an appropriate subject to write about—as "the vanity of life" was by the good-natured traveler suggested to the inquiring hermit as a suitable theme for meditation. Through all the ages has sounded the praise of patriotism, the love of country. Philanthropy, the love of mankind, is a modern invention—a newfangled notion with which it is unprofitable to reckon.

But while the love of country has been so generally and so justly extolled, too little has been said in praise of that still more highly concentrated virtue, the love of county. This noble sentiment is even more nearly general (where there are counties) than the other. That it is a stronger and more fervent passion

goes without saying. The natural laws of affection are extremely simple and commonplace. The human heart has a fixed and definite quantity of affection; no two have the same quantity, but in each it is definite and incapable of augmentation. It follows that the more objects it is bestowed upon, the less each object will get; the more ground it is made to cover, the more thinly it must be spread out. A woman, for example, cannot love a child, five dogs, a Japanese teapot, *The Ladies' Weekly Dieaway,* an exquisite shade of lavender and a foreign count any harder than, in the absence of the other blessings, she could love the child alone. Similarly, the man whose patriotism embraces the ninety millions of Americans, Americanesses and Americanettes can care very little for any one of them; whereas he whose less comprehensive heart takes in the inhabitants of only a single county must, especially in the sparsely settled districts, be comparatively enamored of each individual. It is this that gives to parochialism (it has not been more definitely named) a dignity altogether superior to that of the diffused sentiment which the historians, the homilists, orators, poets and newspaper poets have united in belauding, not without

reason, though, in the case of those last mentioned, commonly without rhyme. In the love of county the gifted ladies of the Women's Press Association would find a theme surpassed in sublimity by but one other, namely the love of township. Of that sacred passion no uninspired pen would dare to write.

DISINTRODUCTIONS

THE devil is a citizen of every country, but only in our own are we in constant peril of an introduction to him. That is democracy. All men are equal; the devil is a man; therefore, the devil is equal. If that is not a good and sufficient syllogism I should be pleased to know what is the matter with it.

To write in riddles when one is not prophesying is too much trouble; what I am affirming is the horror of the characteristic American custom of promiscuous, unsought and unauthorized introductions.

You incautiously meet your friend Smith in the street; if you had been prudent you would have remained indoors. Your helplessness makes you desperate and you plunge into conversation with him, knowing entirely well the disaster that is in cold storage for you.

The expected occurs: another man comes along and is promptly halted by Smith and

you are introduced! Now, you have not given to the Smith the right to enlarge your circle of acquaintance and select the addition himself; why did he do this thing? The person whom he has condemned you to shake hands with may be an admirable person, though there is a strong numerical presumption against it; but for all that the Smith knows he may be your bitterest enemy. The Smith has never thought of that. Or you may have evidence (independent of the fact of the introduction) that he is some kind of thief —there are one thousand and fifty kinds of thieves. But the Smith has never thought of that. In short, the Smith has never thought. In a Smithocracy all men, as aforesaid, being equal, all are equally agreeable to one another.

That is a logical extension of the Declaration of American Independence. If it is erroneous the assumption that a man will be pleasing to me because he is pleasing to another is erroneous too, and to introduce me to one that I have not asked nor consented to know is an invasion of my rights—a denial and limitation of my liberty to a voice in my own affairs. It is like determining what kind of clothing I shall wear, what books I shall read, or what my dinner shall be.

In calling promiscuous introducing an American custom I am not unaware that it obtains in other countries than ours. The difference is that in those it is mostly confined to persons of no consequence and no pretensions to respectability; here it is so nearly universal that there is no escaping it. Democracies are naturally and necessarily gregarious. Even the French of to-day are becoming so, and the time is apparently not distant when they will lose that fine distinctive social sense that has made them the most punctilious, because the most considerate, of all nations excepting the Spanish and the Japanese. By those who have lived in Paris since I did I am told that the chance introduction is beginning to devastate the social situation, and men of sense who wish to know as few persons as possible can no longer depend on the discretion of their friends.

To say so is not the same thing as to say "Down with the republic!" The republic has its advantages. Among these is the liberty to say, "Down with the republic!"

It is to be wished that some great social force, say a billionaire, would set up a system of disintroductions. It should work somewhat like this:

MR. WHITE—Mr. Black, knowing the low esteem in which you hold each other, I have the honor to disintroduce you from Mr. Green.

MR. BLACK (*bowing*)—Sir, I have long desired the advantage of your unacquaintance.

MR. GREEN (*bowing*)—Charmed to unmeet you, sir. Our acquaintance (the work of a most inconsiderate and unworthy person) has distressed me beyond expression. We are greatly indebted to our good friend here for his tact in repairing the mischance.

MR. WHITE—Thank you. I'm sure you will become very good strangers.

This is only the ghost of a suggestion; of course the plan is capable of an infinite elaboration. Its capital defect is that the persons who are now so liberal with their unwelcome introductions, will be equally lavish with their disintroductions, and will estrange the best of friends with as little ceremony as they now observe in their more fiendish work.

1902.

THE TYRANNY OF FASHION

I

THE mindless male of our species is commonly engaged in committing an indelicate assault upon woman's taste in dress. He is graciously pleased to dislike the bright colors that she wears. Her dazzling headgear, her blinding parasol, her gorgeous frock with its burning bows and sunset streamers, the iridescence of her neckwear, the radiant glories of her scarves and the flaming splendor of her hose —these various and varied brilliances pain the eyes of this weakling, making him sad. He seems so miserable that it is charity to wish that he had died when he was little—when he was himself in hue (and cry) a blazing scarlet.

Every man to his taste; doubtless mine is barbaric. Anyhow, I like the rich, bright bravery that the ladies wear. It is not a healthy eye that is offended by intensity of

color. It is not an honest taste that admires it in a butterfly, a humming bird or a sunset, and derides it in a woman. Nature is opulent of color; one has to look more than twice to see what a wealth of brilliant hues are about him, so used to them have our eyes become. They are everywhere—on the hills, in the air, the water, the cloud. They float like banners in the sunlight and lurk in shadows. No artist can paint them; none dares to if he could. The critics would say he had gone mad and the public would believe them. And it is wicked to believe a critic.

Nature has no taste; she makes odious and hideous combinations of tints that swear at one another like quarreling cats—hues that mutually rend and slay. She has the unparalleled stupidity to spread a blue sky above a green plain and draw it down to the horizon, where the two colors exhaust themselves in debating their differences. To be quite plain about it, Nature is a dowdy old vulgarian. She has no more taste than Shakspeare.

Just as Shakspeare poured out the unassorted jewels of his inexhaustible understanding—cut, uncut, precious, bogus, crude, contemptible and superb, all together, so Nature prodigally lavishes her largess of color. I am

not sure that Shakspeare did not teach her the trick. Let the ladies, profiting by her bounty, emulate her virtues and avoid her vice, each having due regard to her own kind of beauty, and taking thought for its fitting embellishment and display. Let them not permit the neutral-tinted minds of the "subdued-color" fiends to fray them with utterance of feeble platitude.

An intolerable deal of nonsense has been uttered, too, about the heartlessness of fashionable women in wearing the plumage of song-birds—and all women are fashionable, and therefore "heartless," whom fortune has favored with means to that end. It is conceded by those who utter the nonsense that it does no good; and that fact alone would make it nonsense if the lack of wisdom did not inhere in its every proposition. No doubt the offending female is herself somewhat punctured in the conscience of her as she goes beautifuling herself with the "starry plumes" which "expanded shine with azure, green and gold," and remembers the unchristian censure entailed by her passion for this manner of headgear. If so, let her take comfort in this present assurance that she is only obeying an imperious mandate of her nature, which is

also a universal law. To be comely in the eyes of the male—that is the end and justification of her being, and she knows it. Moreover, to the task of its accomplishment she brings an intelligence distinctly superior to that with which we judge the result. We may say that we don't like her to have a fledged head; and that may be true enough: our error consists in thinking that this is the same proposition as that we don't like her with her head fledged. Clearly, we do: we like her better with her feathers than without, and shall continue to prefer her that way as long as she is likely to hold the feathers in service; then we shall again like her better without them, even as we liked her better with them. The lesson whereof is that what are called the "caprices" of fashion have an underlying law as constant as that of gravitation.

In this one thing the woman is wise in her day and generation. She may be unable to formulate her wisdom; it must, indeed be confessed that she commonly makes a pretty bad attempt at explanation of anything; but she knows a deal more than she knows that she knows. One of the things that she perfectly apprehends is the evanescence of æsthetic gratification, entailing the necessity of infinite

variety in the method of its production; and the knowledge of this is power. In countries where the women of one generation adorn themselves as the women of another did, they are slaves, and their bondage, I am constrained to say, is just. Efface the caprices of fashion—let our women look always the same, even their loveliest, and in a few years we should be driving them in harness. If the fowls of the air can serve her in averting the catastrophe, woman is right in employing their artful aid. Moreover—a point hitherto overlooked—it is mostly men who kill the fowls.

Urged to its logical conclusion, the argument of the Audubon Society (named in honor of the most eminent avicide of his time) against the killing of song-birds to decorate their betters withal would forbid the killing of the sheep, an amiable quadruped; the fur-seal—extremely graceful in the water; the domestic cow—distinguished for matronly virtues; and the donkey, which, although it has no voice, is gifted with a fine ear and works up well into a superior foreign sausage. In short, we should emancipate ourselves from Nature's universal law of mutual destruction, and, lest we efface something which

has the accidental property of pleasing some of our senses, go naked, feed upon the viewless wind and sauce our privation with the incessant spectacle of song-birds pitching into one another with tigerish ferocity and committing monstrous excesses on bees and butterflies.

We need not concern ourselves about "extermination"; the fashion is not going to last long enough for that, and if it threatened to do so the true remedy is not abstention, but breeding. Probably there was a time when appeals were made for preservation of what is now the domestic "rooster"—a truly gorgeous bird to look at. If he had not been good to eat (in his youth) and his wife a patient layer their race would have been long extinct. All that preserves the ostrich is the demand for its plumage. If dead pigs were not erroneously considered palatable there would not be a living pig within reach of man's avenging arm. Who but for the value of their scalps would be at the trouble and expense of breeding coyotes? Thus we see how it is in the economy of nature that out of the nettle danger the lower animals pluck the flower safety; and it may easily be that the hatbird will owe its life to the profit that we

have in its death, and in the flare of the plume-hunter's gun will "hail the dawn of a new era."

II

Women have a comfortable way of personifying their folly under the name "Fashion," and laying their sins upon it. The "tyranny of Fashion" is of a more iron-handed quality than that of anything else excepting Man. I do steadfastly believe that many women have a distinct and definitive conception of this monster as a gigantic biped (male, of course) ever in session upon an iron throne, promulgating and enforcing brutal decrees for their enslavement. Against this cruel being they feel that rebellion would be perilous and remonstrance vain. The person who complains of "the tyranny of fashion" is a self-confessed fool. There is no such thing as fashion; it is as purely an abstraction as, for example, indolence in a cat, or speed in a horse. Fancy a wild mare complaining that she is a slave to celerity! Moralizers, literarians and divers sorts of homilizers have been cracking this meatless nut on our heads and comforting the stomachs of their understandings with the imaginary kernel for lo! these many genera-

tions, and have even persuaded the rest of us that there is something in it—as much, at least as there was in the pocket of Lady Locket. It has not even so much in it as that; not the half of it: the phrase "women's slavery to fashion" has absolutely *no* meaning, and one about to use it might as profitably use, instead, John Stuart Mill's faultless example of jargon: "Humpty Dumpty is an abracadabra." Woman can not be called submissive to fashion, for the submission and the thing submitted to are the same thing. Even a woman can not be called a slave to slavery; and it is the slavery that *is* the fashion. What else can we possibly mean by "fashion," when using the word with reference to women's bondage, than women's habit of dressing alike and badly? It can not mean, in this connection, the style of their clothing; that cannot "enslave"; and we do not speak of slavery to anything good and desirable. Habit and addiction to habit are not two things, but one. In short, women, having chosen to make fools of themselves, have personified their folly and persuaded men to see in it a tyrant with a chain and whip.

The word fashion is used as a convenient generic term for a multitude of related stu-

pidities and cowardices in character and conduct, and for the results of them. To say that one must "follow the fashions" is to say that one is compelled to be stupid and cowardly. What compels? Under what stress of compulsion are women in making themselves hideous in one way or another all the time—each year a different kind of hideousness? Who commands them to get their shoulders above their heads, blow up their sleeves and elongate their lapels to suggest the collar-points of a negro minstrel? When have not men tried to prevent them from doing these things and remain content with a tideless impulchritude—an ugliness having slight and slow vicissitudes, such as themselves are satisfied withal? Doubtless women's quarrel with their outward and visible appearance is a natural and reasonable sentiment, a noble discontent; for they do look scarecrows, and no mistake; but the effect which they have at any given time achieved, and at which they afterward are aghast, is not to be bettered by eternal tinkering with the same tools. In new brains and a new taste lies their only hope of repair; lacking which, they would do well to let Time the healer touch our wounded eyes, and inurement bring toleration.

"The iron hand of custom and tradition," wails one of the female disputants, "makes a pitiable race of us." What a way to put it! Could it not occur to this gentle creature that if we were not a pitiable race—pitiable for our brute stupidity—custom and tradition would not be iron-handed? We are savages in the same sense that the N'gamwanee is a savage, who will not appear at any festival without his belly painted a joyous sky-blue. But among us none is so amusing a savage as she who squeals like a pig in a gate at "the tyranny of custom," when nothing is pinching her.

III

An error analogous to this personification of her own folly as a pitiless oppressor is that of considering at length and with gravity the character, fortunes, motives and duties of "woman." Woman does not exist—there are women. Of woman nothing that has more than a suggestive, literary or rhetorical value can be said. Like the word "fashion," the word "woman" is convenient, and of legitimate use by persons of sense who understand that it is not the name of anything on the earth, in the heavens above the earth,

nor in the waters under the earth—that there is nothing in nature corresponding to it. To others its use should be interdicted, for like all abstract words, it is a pitfall to their clumsy feet. If the word is used to signify the whole body of women it obviously assumes that, with regard to the matters under consideration, they are all alike—which is untrue, for some are dead. If it means less than the whole body of women it is obligatory upon the person using it to say precisely what proportion of the sex it means. The way to determine woman's true place in the social scheme is simple: make an exhaustive inquiry into the character, capacities, desires, needs and opportunities of every individual woman. When you have finished the result will be glorious: you will know almost as much as you knew before.

Concerning woman, I should like to be allowed a brief digression into the troubled territory of her "rights"—a field of contention in which her champions manifest an inadequate conception of the really considerable powers of Omnipotence. A distinguishing feature of this logomachy is the frequent outcrop of a certain kind of piety that is unconnected with any respect for, or belief in, the

power of Him evoking it. These linked assumptions of God's worth and God's incompetence are made variously: sometimes by implication, sometimes with a directness that distresses the agnostic and makes the atheist blush. One disputant says: "Would a woman be less womanly because conceited Man had granted her the rights that God intended she should have?" Now, if man really has the power to baffle the divine will and make the divine intentions void of effect he may reasonably enough cherish a fairly good opinion of himself—perhaps any degree of conceit that is consistent with his scriptural character of poor worm of the dust.

A noble example of piety undimmed by disrespect is that of a Presbyterian minister, who began his remarks thus: "Has woman today all the rights she ought to have—all the rights Christ meant her to have? I fully concede she has not." This is not very good English, but I dare say it is good religion, this conception of Christ as a "well-meaning person," but without much influence in obtaining favors for his friends. Anyhow, it is authenticated by the clerical sign-manual, which sets it at a longer remove from blasphemy than at first sight it may seem to be,

and makes it so holy that I hardly dared to mention it. I hope it is not irreverent to say so; it is not said in that spirit, but I can not help thinking that if I were God I should find some way to carry out my intentions; and that if I were Christ and had not a sufficient influence to secure for Lively Woman the rights that I meant her to have I should retire from public life, sever my connection with the Presbyterian church and go to work.

IV

Ladies of "health culture" clubs are sharply concerned about the length of the skirts they wear. The purpose of their organizations, indeed, is to protect them against their habit of wearing the skirts too long. It has apparently not occurred to them that here, too, nobody is compelling them to continue a disagreeable practice, and that with a pair of scissors any woman can accomplish for herself all that she wants the clubs to do for her. If the long skirt no longer please, why not drop it? Nothing is easier. No concert of action definitely agreed on was required to bring it in; none is required to oust it. The enterprising gentleman who, having laid hold of the

tail of a bear, called lustily for somebody to help him let go, acted from an intelligible motive, but I submit that if a woman stop following a disagreeable fashion it will not turn and rend her.

No more hideous garment than the skirt is knowable or thinkable. In its every aspect it discloses an inherent and irremediable impulchritude. It is devoid of even the imaginary beauty of utility, for it is not only needless but obstruent, impeditive, oppugnant. Promoting the sense of restraint, it enslaves the character. Had one been asked to invent a garment that should make its wearer servile in spirit one would have consulted the foremost living oppressor and designed the skirt. That reasonless habiliment ought long ago to have been flung into Nature's vacant lot and found everlasting peace along with gone-before cats, late-lamented dogs, unsouled tin cans and other appurtenances and proofs of mortality. There is not a valid reason in the world why a skirt of any length, shape or material should ever have been worn; and one of the strongest evidences of women's unfitness for a part in the larger affairs of the race is their obstinacy in clinging to the skirt—or rather in permitting it to cling to them. So

long as women garb their bodies and their legs foolwise they may profitably save that part of their breath now wasted in becoloneling themselves and reducing Tyrant Man to the ranks.

Doubtless the skirt figures as one count in the long indictment against the Oppressor Sex, as once bracelets and bangles did—it being pointed out with acerbity that these are vestigial remnants of chains and shackles. The same "claim" has been made for the eviscerating corset—I forget upon what grounds. Of course men have had nothing to do with the corset, excepting, in season and out of season, to implore women not to wear it. The skirt we have merely tolerated, or from lack of thought assented to. But if we were the sons of darkness which in deference to the lady colonels we feel that we ought to confess ourselves, and if we had been minded to enslave our bitter halves, we could hardly have done better than to have "invented and gone round advising" the skirt. Any constant restraint of the body reacts upon the mind. To hamper the limbs is to subdue the spirit. Other things equal—which they could not be—a naked nation would be harder to conquer than one accustomed to clothing. The costume of the modern "civilized" man

is bad enough in this way, but that of his female is a standing challenge to the fool-killer. Considering the use and purpose of the human leg, it seems almost incredible that this hampering garment could have been imposed upon women by anything less imperative than a divine commandment.

One reads a deal about the "immodesty" of the skirtless costume, not, I think, because any one believes it immodest, but because its opponents find in that theme an assured immunity from prosecution in making an indecent exposure of their minds. This talk of immodesty is simply one manifestation of public immorality—the immorality of an age in which it is considered right and reputable for women and girls, in company with men, to witness the capering of actresses and dancers who in the name of art strip themselves to the ultimate inch—whose every motion in their saltatory rites is nicely calculated to display as much of the person as the law allows! Why else do they whirl and spin till their make-believe skirts are horizontal? Why else do they spring into the air and come down like a collapsed parachute? These motions have nothing of grace; in point of art they are distinctly disagreeable. Their sole

purpose is indelicate suggestion. Every male spectator knows this; every female as well; yet we lie to ourselves and to one another in justification—lie knowing that no one is thereby deceived as to the nature of the performance and our motives in attending it. We call it art, and if that flimsy fiction were insufficient would doubtless call it duty. The only person that affects no illusion in the matter is the exhibiting hussy herself. She at least is free of the sin of hypocrisy—save when condemning "bloomers" in the public press.

As censors of morals the ladies of the ballet are perhaps half-a-trifle insincere; I like better the simple good faith of the austere society dame who to a large and admiring audience of semi-nude men displays her daughter's charms of person at the bathing beach, with an occasional undress parade of her own ample endowments. She is in deadly earnest, the good old girl—she is entirely persuaded of the wickedness of the "bloomers." Why, it would hardly be more indelicate (she says) to wear her bathing habit in the street or drawing-room! If she were not altogether destitute of reason she would deprive herself of that illustration, for a costume is no more

indelicate in one public place than in another. One of the congenital ear-marks of the Philistine understanding is inability to distinguish inappropriateness from immodesty—bad taste from faulty morals. The blush that would crimson the cheek of a woman shopping in evening dress (and women who wear evening dress sometimes retain the blush-habit; such are the wonders of heredity!) would indubitably have its origin in a keen sense of exposure. It would make a cat laugh, but it would be an honest blush and eminently natural. The phenomenon requiring an explanation is the no-blush when she is caught in the same costume at a ball or a dinner.

In nations that cover the body for another purpose than decoration and protection from the weather, disputes as to how much of it, and in what circumstances, should be covered are inevitable and uncomposable. Alike in nature and in art, the question of the nude will be always demanding adjustment and be never adjusted. This wrangle we have always with us as a penalty for the prudery of concealment, creating and suggesting the prurience of exposure.

> Offended Nature hides her lash
> In the purple-black of a dyed mustache,

and the lash lurks in every fold of the clothing of her choice. In ancient Greece the disgraceful squabble was unknown; it did not occur to the great-hearted, broad-brained and wholesome people of that blessed land that any of the handiwork of the gods was ignoble. Nor are the modern Japanese vexed with "the question of the nude"; save where their admirable civilization has suffered the polluting touch of ours they have not learned the infamy of sex. Among the blessings in store for them are their conversion to decorous lubricity and instruction in the nice conduct of a clouded mind.

I am not myself prepared to utter judgment in all these matters. I do not know the precise degree of propriety in a lady's "full dress" at dinner, nor exactly how suggestive it is at breakfast. I can not say with accuracy when and where and why a costume is immodest that is modest in a mixed crowd at the sea beach. But this I know, despite all the ingenious fictions, subtleties and sophistries wherewith naked Nonsense is accustomed to drape herself as with a skeletonized fig-leaf: that no man nor any woman addicted to play-going, society entertainments and surf-bathing has the right to censure any costume

that is tolerated by the police. As to the "bloomers," they have not a suggestion of indelicacy, and of the person who professes to see it in them I, for one, am fatigued and indisposed; and I confidently affirm the advantage to the commonwealth of binding him to his own back and removing the organ that he is an idiot with.

I have the vanity to think it already known to me why our women wear the skirt—just as it is known to me why the women of certain African tribes load themselves with enormous metal neck-rings and the male of their variety attaches a cow-tail to his barren rear. But what these impedimental adornments are for, the wearers can no more explain than the Caucasian female (assisted by her "man of equal mind") can expound the purpose of her skirt, nor even be made to understand that its utility is actually challenged. But what would one have? Wisdom comes of mental freedom; are we to look for that in victims and advocates of physical restraint? Can we reasonably expect large intellectual strides in those who voluntarily hamper their legs? Is it to be believed that an unremittent sense of hindrance will not affect the mind and character? With woman's inconsiderable reason-

ing power the skirt, the corset and the finery have had as much to do as anything. If she wants emancipation from the imaginary tyranny of Man the Monster, let her show herself worthy of it by overthrowing the actual despotism maintained by herself. Let her unbind her body and liberate her legs; then we shall know if she has a mind that can be taught to stand alone and march without the suasion of a bayonet.

1895.

BREACHES OF PROMISE

THERE should be no such thing as an action for a breach of promise of marriage. An action for promise of marriage would be in some ways preferable, for where damages ensue it is the promise that has caused them. Doubtless the hurt heart of one who is abandoned by her lover, especially after providing the trousseau and kindly apprising all her rivals, is justly entitled to sympathetic commiseration, but the pain is one that the law can not undertake to heal. In theory at least it concerns itself with actual privation of such pecuniary advantages as would have accrued to the plaintiff from marriage with the defendant, and such other losses as can be denoted by the figures of arithmetic. If the defendant were liable for the pain he inflicted by breaking his promise he might justly demand compensation for the joy that he gave in making it. Where the courtship had been long there might be a considerable balance in his

favor. Nor is it altogether clear that he ought not to be allowed to file a counter-claim based upon the profit of getting rid of him.

But is the loss of a merely promised advantage a loss that ought to be a matter of legal inquiry and repair? In the promise to pay money, and in papers transferring property from one person to another, it is requisite that a "consideration" be expressed: the person claiming value from another must show that value was given. What is the consideration in the case of a marriage-promise? What computable value has the defendant in a breach of promise case received that the plaintiff could, or if she could would care to, estimate in dollars and cents? Would she undertake to submit an itemized bill? As a rule, the promiser of marriage receives nothing for which the performance of his promise would be an "equivalent" in the commercial sense. True, he obtains by his promise certain privileges which (it is said) he deems precious; but all the accepted authorities on this subject declare that in the exercise of these he imparts no small satisfaction to the person bestowing them.

Accurately speaking, then, a promise of marriage is a promise without consideration;

and whatever merely sentimental injuries result from its infraction might justly be squared by a merely sentimental reparation. Perhaps it would be enough if the injured plaintiff in a breach of promise suit were awarded the illusory advantage but acceptable gratification of wigging the defendant's attorney.

It may be said that the defendant's equivalent for his promise was the lady's tender of such services as wives perform for husbands —among which the peasant-born humorist of the period loves to enumerate such mysterious functions as "building the fire" and assisting to search for the soap in the bath-tub. But it must not be overlooked that this tender is itself only a promise whereof the performance fails, along with that of the one for which it is given in exchange: the fire remains unbuilded and the soap is lost. One unfulfilled promise is no better than another. Nay, it is not so good.

But if we are to have suits for breach of promise of marriage it can at least be so ordered that there shall be no question of proof. An act of the legislature is enough for that. Let there be a law that marriage engagements to be valid shall be in writing. This would

work no hardship to anybody, and would be a pleasing contrast to the law which does *not* require any authenticating formality for the marriage itself. If a man really wish and mean to marry he will not be unwilling to say so over his hand and seal, and have the declaration duly attested. The lack of such evidence as this should be a bar to any action. It is admitted that this rigorous requirement would be pretty hard on such ladies as rich bachelors and widowers have the hardihood to be civil to, and that it would deprive the intelligent juror of such delight as he derives from giving away another man's property without loss to himself. Its advantage would be found in its tendency to prevent the courts of law from being loaded up with the class of cases under consideration, to the exclusion of much other business. The number of wealthy men increases yearly with the country's prosperity, and they grow more and more unmarried. Under the present system they are easy prey, but the operation of despoiling them is tedious; wherefore worthy assassins are compelled to wait an unconscionably long time for acquittal. The reform that I venture to suggest would disembarrass the courts of the ambitious "ladifrend" and

the scheming domestic, and give the murderers a chance. As a matter of expediency, I think a man should be permitted to change his mind as to whom he will marry, as frequently as it may please him to do so; almost any change in the mind of a man in love must be in the direction of improvement.

THE TURKO-GRECIAN WAR

THE Turks are not the ferocious fanatics that our respect for the commandment against bearing false witness does not forbid us to affirm. They are a good-natured, rather indolent people, among whom all races and religions find security in good behavior, and, in so far as differences of social and religious customs will allow, fraternity. They are a trifle corrupt, but from neither an American legislator nor his constituents is censure of political profligacy in other lands than ours an edifying utterance. In Mohammedan countries even slavery is a light affliction. As to "savagery," "butchery" and the rest of it, let the ten thousand Americans murdered with impunity by their own countrymen last year open their white lips and testify. And let the ten thousand who are to be murdered this year reserve judgment on the right of the American character to mount the pulpit and

deal damnation round on heads that wear the fez.

Like the Bulgarian "massacres" of a few years ago, which so pained the blameless soul of Christendom and drew from holy Mr. Gladstone that Christianly charitable term, "the unspeakable Turk," the Armenian "massacres" are mostly moonshine—as massacres. It should never be forgotten that our accounts of these deplorable events come almost altogether from Christian missionaries—narrow, bigoted zealots, who doubtless stand well in the other world, but in this world are untrustworthy historians of the troubles which their impenitent meddlesomeness incites. They are swift and willing witnesses, and their interest lies in the direction of exaggeration. Not much of moderation and disinterestedness can under any circumstances be expected of persons who make it the business of their lives to go abroad to crack theological nuts upon the heads of others and eat the kernels themselves. A man of sane heart and right reason will no more interfere with the spiritual affairs of others than with their temporal. This much any one may know who has the sense to learn: that the troubles in Armenia are not religious persecutions, but

political disturbances, and that next to Mohammedan Kurds the most incorrigible scamps in Asia are Armenian Christians.

Among military men the superior character of Turkish soldiers is a familiar consideration. The war minister or general who should order or conduct a campaign against them without conceding to their terrible fighting qualities a particular attention in reckoning the chances of success would show a lamentable ignorance of his business. For that veritable folly the Greeks recently paid through the nose. With a childish trust in an enthusiasm that hardly outlasted the smoke of the first gun, they threw their undisciplined crowds against superior numbers of these formidable fighters in a quarrel in which their only hope of national existence if beaten lay in the magnanimity of the Powers whose protection they disclaimed. It is by the sufferance and grace of these Powers that the name of Greece remains on the map of Europe.

All this sentiment about the debt that civilization owes to Greece is foolish: the Greece to which civilization is indebted for its glorious heritage of art, philosophy and literature is dead these many ages—a memory and

a name. The debtor is without a creditor, the claimant without a claim. Greece would herself be justly liable for her share of the debt if there were anybody to whom to pay it. As to the claims of "our common religion" (that is, the right to our assistance in violating our common religion's fundamental and most precious precepts) it should be sufficient to say that if the modern Greek is a Christian Christ was not. If Christ were among the Athenians to-day they would part his raiment among them before crucifixion and cast lots for his vesture with loaded dice.

From the first the cause of the Greeks was hopeless. They were a feeble nation making unjust war against a strong one. They were a merely warlike people attacking a military people—the worst soldiers in Europe, without commanders, challenging the best soldiers in the world led by two able strategists. Without resources, without credit, without allies, and relying upon miracles, they flung themselves upon an enemy favored by united Europe. It was the act not of heroes, but of madmen. Had they been content to accept the autonomy of Crete their action in occupying that island would have commanded at least the respect of every poker-player in the

world. Demanding all, they naturally got nothing. True, they had the moral support of that part of Christendom addicted to the flourish of tongues, and were particularly rich in resolutions of American sympathy, some of them beautifully engrossed on parchment.

One of the most amusing rascalities of that war was the attempt to invest it with a religious character. This smug villainy was especially manifest in the "resolutions" and the telegrams of press correspondents, from whom we heard very little about the Turks and the Greeks, but a great deal about the "Moslems" and the "Christians." Even the soldierly superiority of the Turks in valor and discipline was perverted to their disparagement. We were told of their "mad, fanatical charges," which by way of variety were called also "irresistible rushes of crazy zealots"; and one splendorous historiographer described the victorious battalions as "drunken with Armenian blood"! How to distinguish between an assault that is fanatical and one that is merely courageous—that is a secret that neither the saintly scribe nor the sober Greek lingered to learn. In a general way the gallant charge is made by troops of our own race and religion, the fanat-

ical rush by those of another and inferior faith.

Hardly less brilliant were the accounts of "Moslem" cruelty, particularly to prisoners, under whom their captors kindled discomforting fires—a needless labor, for it would have been greatly easier to make the fire on unoccupied ground and superpose the prisoner afterward. The customary rites of parting the heads of women and eviscerating babes were not neglected: all the requirements of invasion received careful attention—as they did in Cuba, as they once did in France, as they previously did in the Southern States of our Union, and before that in the revolted colonies of Great Britain. Edhem Pasha was a strict constructionist of the popular law; as a conscientious invader operating among an inhospitable populace, he thoughtfully gave himself the trouble to be a "butcher"—as Cornwallis was in the Colonies, as Grant was in the South, as Von Moltke was in France, and as Weyler was in Cuba. If it were not for picturesque narratives of tortured prisoners, multisected women, children ingeniously bayoneted and old men fearfully and wonderfully defaced by the hand of an artist, the literature of con-

quest would lack the salt that keeps it sweet in the memory and the spice that gives it glow.

Of course it is all nonsense: cruelties are not practiced in modern wars between civilized nations. (It is true that the Turks, or some of them, are so uncivilized as to have a number of Turkesses each, but that is not visibly bad for them, and appears to be condemned on the ground that it is somehow bad for us.) Indubitably Turkey's doom as a European Power was long ago pronounced in the Russian language, but she dies with a dignity befitting her glorious history. Foot to foot and sword to sword she struggles with the hosts assailing her, now on this side, and now on that. Against attack by her powerful neighbors and insurrection of her heterogeneous provinces, she has manifested a courage, a vitality, a fertility of resource, a continuity and tenacity of purpose which in a Christian nation would command our respect and engage our enthusiasm. Unfortunately for them, her people worship God in a way that is different from our way, and with a sincerity which in us would be zeal if we had it, but which in them is fanaticism. Therefore they are hateful. Therefore they are unspeakable. Therefore we lie about them and,

because of the respectability of the witnesses, believe our own lies. Truth is not in us, nor the sense of its need; charity nor the memory of its primacy among virtues.

1897.

CATS OF CHEYENNE

THE city of Cheyenne, Wyoming, recently experienced a peculiar and singularly sharp affliction in the insanity of all its cats. Cheyenne cats had theretofore been regarded as the most level-headed and least mercurial of their species. Nothing in their aspect nor demeanor had been observed to justify a suspicion that they suffered from uncommonness of mind; then they developed symptoms of such pronounced intellectual independence that even the local physicians, inured to all phases and degrees of eccentricity in the human contingent of Cheyenne's population, were unable to ignore the melancholy significance of the phenomena—the cats of Cheyenne were indubitably as mad as hatters.

To him who has duly considered the cat's place in the scheme of modern civilization, the actual calamity will suggest possibilities of the most dismal and gruesome sort. In imagination he will see (and hear) the mental

epidemic spreading by contagion until it affects the cats of the whole world, and perhaps those of Denver. The musical outlook is discouraging: the orchestration of a feline lunatic in one of its deuced intervals can be nothing less than appalling! Fancy a maniacal male of the species, beneath his favorite window of the dormitory of a hospital for nervous insomnia, securely casemented in an empty crate and courting rather than avoiding the assaults of the wild bootjacquerie above, while twanging his disordered fiddle-strings for the production of

> a long unmeasured tone
> To mortal minstrelsy unknown,

and then executing such variants of his theme as no rational cat has ever been able or willing to compose!

The cause of the outbreak was no less remarkable than the outbreak itself: the cats of Cheyenne incurred mental confusion from being supercharged with electricity. For a period of seven weeks the wind blew across the delightful region of which that city is the capital, at a calculated average velocity of thirty miles an hour. "The ground in conse-

quence," according to a resident scientist, "has become extremely dry, and the friction of the wind in passing over it has produced an enormous quantity of electricity, and every one is more or less charged." So seriously indeed were some of the newer residents affected that they have had to leave Cheyenne and go to California for relief; and of those remaining it is related that even now when they shake hands there is a distinct and painful shock to him who is the less electrified. The performance of this social rite has therefore fallen into "innocuous desuetude," men conscious of being imperfectly charged eying every approaching friend with natural suspicion, and preferring to pain him with a distant bow rather than incur the thunderbolt of a more familiar greeting. It is not apprehended that our most sacred American custom is menaced with anything more than local and temporary suspension, but it is feared that the American cat is on the eve of stupendous intellectual and musical changes that will make the name of Cheyenne memorable forever.

THANKSGIVING DAY

THERE be those whose memories though vexed with a rake would yield no matter for gratitude. With a waistcoat fitted to the occasion, it is easy enough to eat one's allowance of turkey and hide away one's dishonest share of the wine; if this be returning thanks, why, then, gratitude is considerably easier, and vastly more agreeable, than "falling off a log," and may be acquired in one easy lesson. But if more than this be required—if to be grateful is more than merely to be gluttonous, your true philosopher (he of the austere brow upon which logic has stamped its eternal impress, and from whose heart sentiment has been banished along with other vestigial vices) will think twice and again before leveling his serviceable shins in humble observance of the day.

For here is the nut of reason that he is compelled to crack for the kernel of emotion appropriate to the rite. Unless the blessings

that we think we enjoy are favors of the Omnipotent, to be grateful is to be absurd. If they are, then, also, the evils with which we are indubitably afflicted have the same origin. Grant this, as you must, and you make an offset of the ill against the good, or are driven either to the untenable position that we should be grateful for both, or the no more defensible one that all evils are blessings in disguise.

Truth is, my fine fellow of the distensible weskit, your annual gratitude is a sorry pretense, a veritable sham, a cloak, dear man, to cover your unhandsome gluttony; and when by chance you actually do take to your knees on one day in the year it is for physical relief and readier digestion of your bird. Nevertheless, there is truly a subtle but significant relation between the stuffing of the flesh and the gratitude of the spirit, as you shall see.

I have ever held and taught the identity of Stomach and Soul—one entity considered under two aspects. Gratitude I believe to be a kind of imponderable ether evolved, mainly, from the action of the gastric fluid upon rich provend and comforting tope. Like other gases it ascends, and so passes out at mouth, audible, intelligible, gracious. This beautiful theory has been tested by convincing ex-

periment in the manner scientific, as here related.

Experiment I. A quantity of grass was put into a leathern bottle and a gill of the gastric fluid of a sheep introduced. In ten minutes the neck of the bottle emitted a contented bleat.

Experiment II. A pound of beef was substituted for the grass and the fluid of a dog for that of the sheep. The result was a cheerful bark, accompanied by agitation of the bottom of the bottle, as if an attempt were making to wag it.

Experiment III. The bottle was charged with a handful of chopped turkey, a glass of old port, and four ounces of human gastric fluid obtained from a coroner. At first nothing escaped from the neck but a deep sigh of satisfaction, followed by a grunt like that of a banqueting pig. The proportion of turkey being increased and the gas confined, the bottle was greatly distended, appearing to suffer a slight uneasiness. The restriction being removed, the experimenter had the happiness to hear, distinctly articulated, the words: "Praise God, from whom all bless-

ings flow—praise Him all bottles here below!"

Against such demonstration as this all theological interpretation of the phenomena of gratitude is of no avail.

1869.

THE HOUR AND THE MAN

CONTRARY to popular belief, "the hour" does not always bring "the man." It did not bring him for France in 1870. In our civil war it brought him for the Confederacy, but a chance bullet took him off. Every defeat of a cause discredits anew the superstition about "the hour and the man." When the hour strikes, the man may be already present and not hear. The "mute, inglorious Milton," dying with all his music in him, is no more real a character than the mute, inglorious Cæsar trudging along in the ranks, unsuspected by his comrades and unaware of himself. Even if conscious of his own consummate genius, and impressing a sense of it upon others, it is by no means certain that he will come to the control. An intrigue, the selfish jealousy of some little soul in authority, the caprice of a woman behind the throne, an unfortunate peculiarity of manner in himself, a stumbling horse, a random bullet—any one

of ten thousand accidents may deprive his country of the stupendous advantage of his directing hand.

It was once the fashion among the school of thinkers of which that truly great man, John Stuart Mill, was the head almost altogether to ignore the "personal equation" in matters of "great pith and moment." They recognized the trend of tendencies—great currents of energy which apparently had an existence and control quite independent of, and apart from, human agency. In their view, individual men, so far from guiding the course of events, were borne along by them like leaves by the wind. They taught, by implication if not directly, that the Europe of their day would have been pretty much the same without, for example, the Napoleon of the day before. The conception of a single dominating mind bending other minds to its will and working stupendous changes, even by its caprices, these philosophers considered altogether too primitive and crude for the world's manhood, and most of us who were young in their day assisted in discrediting their theory by reverently accepting it. We have recovered now; nobody today thinks after that fashion of thought, ex-

cepting Tolstoi. The importance of the individual will, consciously striving for the attainment of definitive ends, yet subject to all the caprices of chance and accident, is restored in the minds of men to its own reign of reason.

Considering the matter only in the limited view of its relation to military success, we all see, or suppose ourselves to see, that if Marlborough had died of measles when he was John Churchill; if Frederick had burst a blood vessel in one of his blind rages before he became the Great; if Carnot had fallen down a cellar stairway when he was a boy; if Napoleon had been knocked over at the bridge of Arcola, or Von Moltke had deserted to the French and been given command of the column that was headed for Berlin, the historian of to-day would have had a Europe to deal with which it is impossible now even to conceive. Suppose that "the hour" had not brought John Sobieski to confront the victorious Turk a couple of centuries ago. Europe might now be Mohammedan and the word Russia destitute of meaning. Considerations of this character may advantageously be permitted to teach us humility in the matter of prophecy, and particularly with refer-

ence to military undertakings, than the result of which nothing is more beset with accident and dependent upon the unknowable and incalculable.

MORTUARY ELECTROPLATING

TO the proposition that electroplating the dead is the best way to dispose of them there is this considerable objection—it does not dispose of them. The plan is not without its advantages, some of which are obvious enough to mention. Nothing, for example, can be more satisfactory to a husband engaged in dying than the reflection that as a nickel-plated statue of himself he may still adorn the conjugal fireside and become an object of peculiar interest and sympathy to his successor. There are few remains, indeed, to whom this would not seem a softer billet than "to lie in cold obstruction" in a cemetery, from which, after all, one is usually routed out in a few years to accommodate a corner grocery or a boarding-house.

The light cost of ornamenting our public buildings with distinguished men themselves, as compared with the present enormous expense of obtaining statues of them, will com-

mend the régime of electroplating to every frugal taxpayer and make him hail its dawn with a peculiar joy. In order to make the most of this advantage it is to be hoped that any public-spirited "prominent citizen" feeling his sands of life about run out, would consent to be posed by an artist in some striking and heroic attitude, ready for the *rigor mortis* to fix him in it for the plater. It would be but a trifling sacrifice for a great writer to pass the last ten minutes of his life cross-legged in a chair, with a pen in one hand and a thumb and forefinger of the other spanning a space on his dome of thought. A distinguished statesman would not find it so very inconvenient to breathe his last standing in the characteristic attitude of his profession, his left thumb supported in the opening of a waistcoat thoughtfully constructed to button the wrong way, and his right hand holding a scroll. In dying grandly on the acclivity of a rearing horse, a famous warrior could at the same time lay his countrymen under an added obligation and assist them fitly to discharge it.

The process of electroplation (if one may venture to anticipate a word that is inevitable) does not, unluckily, permit us to retain

the deceased "in his habit as he lived," textile fabrics not being susceptible to the magic of its method; but the figures of eminent decedents exposed in public places to fire the ambition of American youth could be provided with real tailor-made suits, either in the fashion of their time and Congressional district or in that of ancient Rome, as might be preferred by the public taste for the time being, and the tailors' bills would probably, in some instances, be almost as interesting, if not nearly so startling, as that item in an early English Passion-play account, in which the management is charged five shillings and sixpence for "a cote for Godd."

To that entire class of decedents whom we may call eminent-public-services men, the objection that electroplating the dead does not permanently dispose of them has no practical application. Of them we do not wish to dispose; we want to retain them for embellishment of our parks, the façades of our public buildings and the walls of our art galleries. But in its relation to "vulgar deaths unknown to fame" the objection is indeed fatal. If this mortal is going to put on immortality in so strictly literal a sense—if the dead are to be still with us in a tangible and visible

reality, the fact will be embarrassing, no doubt. Under a régime in which a dead man will take up as much room as a living one, it is evident that the dead in general will take up a deal more than the living, and the disproportion will increase at an alarming rate.

Science assures us that but for death—including decay—the world would now be so overcrowded that there would be "standing room only," even for scientists. Electroplating proposes to enjoin decay. Is it advisable? Is it wise? Is it fair to posterity? Shall we impose ourselves upon those who "inherit us," without providing for the expense of our warehousing? It can hardly be expected that even the most "well-preserved old gentleman" will be an object of veneration and affection to his great-great-great-grandchild, even if he is so fortunate as to be authentic—unless, indeed, he happen to be plated with gold. In that case, though, he would be hardly likely to descend intact to so remote a generation. An unusually comely electroplatee of the opposing sex might be a joy forever as a work of art, and the task of polishing her be a labor of love for many centuries; but the common ruck of hard-shell ancestors, although bearing inscriptions at-

testing their possession of the loftiest virtues in their day and generation, would inspire an insufficiently tender emotion to pay for their lodging.

The time when our beautiful, but not altogether wholesome, cemeteries shall be no more, and in the place of them countless myriads of battered and rusted images shall be corded up like firewood all over the smiling land is a time which we may be thankful that we shall not live to see, and which our love of display should not make us selfishly assist in expediting. It is a glittering temptation, but in fair play to posterity (which has never done anything to embarrass us) it ought to be put resolutely aside.

THE AGE ROMANTIC

WHO would not like to have been an Athenian of the time of Pericles? Yet who would have liked to be one? The Periclesian Athenian whom we would all like to have been—provided that we could be also Rooseveltian Americans—took little thought, doubtless, of "the glory that was Greece." He considered himself singularly unfortunate to live in so prosaic an age. Ah, if he could only have been born an Assyrian in the golden prime of good King Assurbanipal, before the invention of such hideous commonplaces as mathematics, oratory, navigation (with its flaring pharos on every headland), its bad poets, its Pan and the peplum!

A picturesque period is always remote in time; a picturesque land, in distance. It is of the essence of the picturesque that it be unfamiliar. Look at the suave Mexican *caballero* with his silvered *sombrero,* his silken sash, embroidered jacket fearfully and

wonderfully bebraided, his ornate footgear. How he shines in the light of his uncommon identity!—how dull we look, how odious in the comparison! Can it be possible that this glorious creation envies us the engaging simplicity of our habiliments and the charm of our unstudied incivility? And does he execute a rapture over the title "Mister" and the soft, musical vocables of the name "John Henry Smith"?

Who would care to lose his life in ascending White Mountain by a new trail? But Mont Blanc—that is different.

> Mont Blanc is the monarch of mountains;
> They crowned him long ago,

but be sure it was no Frenchman that did the crowning—not with such a name as that! And if the exigencies of the literary situation had compelled Coleridge to think of him in the vernacular he would never have stood in the valley of Chamouni asking him who sank his sunless pillars deep in earth. "White Mountain" is well enough in its way if one think only of its color; but there is the disquieting possibility that it was named in honor of its discoverer (Ezekiel

White, of Podunk) like the eminences that "stand dressed in living green" down in New Hampshire.

Call Capri "Goat Island" and you class it with an abomination of that name in the harbor of San Franscisco. To the Neapolitan looking

> Across the charmed bay
> Whose blue waves keep, with Capri's sunny fountains,
> Perpetual holiday

it is just Goat Island, and it is nothing more. The sunny fountains and the famous sea-caverns do not interest him. They are possibly fine, but indubitably familiar.

All this has perhaps something to do with contentment; it may go a short way toward making us willing to be alive. We hear much from the writer-folk about the horrors of this commercial age, the dull monotony of modern life, the depressing daily contact with the things we loathe, to wit, railways, steamships, telephones, electric street-cars and other prosaic things which, when we are not boasting of them, we are reviling. We shudder to think of the railway from Joppa to Jerusalem (if there is one) and sigh for

the good old days of the camel—even as we sigh for those of the stage-coach, whereby the traveler met with many romantic adventures in lonely roads and at wayside inns. Well, as to all that, it is still possible to renounce one's purse to a "road agent" between Squaw Gulch and Ginger Gap if one wish to, and "hold-ups" are not altogether unknown to those who in default of the stage-coach are compelled to travel by express trains.

Is any spectacle really more interesting than a railway train in motion? Why, even the stolidest laborer in the field, or the most *blasé* switchman off duty, takes a moment off to stare at it. By night, with its dazzling headlight, its engine eating fire and breathing steam and smoke, its flashes of red light upon the trees as its furnace doors are opened and closed, its long line of gleaming windows, the roar and clang of its progress—not in the world is anything more fascinating, more artistic nor, but for its familiarity, more picturesque.

It is so all round: the Atlantic liner is a nobler sight than the clipper ship of our fathers, as that was a nobler sight than the carvel of *their* fathers, and that than the

Roman trireme—each in its turn lamented by solemn protagonists of "the days that are no more" and might advantageously never have been. How the intellectual successors of these lugubrious persons will envy their dead predecessors in the days that are to come! As they go careering through the sky in their airships they will blow apart the clouds with sighs of regret for the golden age of the express train, the trolley car and the automobile. While penetrating the ocean between the German port of Liverpool and the Japanese port of New York they will read with avid interest quaint old chronicles relating to steam-driven vessels that floated on the surface and had many a merry bout with wind and wave. Immersed in waters all aglow with artificial light and color, passing in silence and security above charming landscapes of the sea, and among

> The wide-faced, infamous monsters of the deep,

they will deplore their hard lot in living in so prosaic an age, "even as you and I."

The truth of it all is that we of to-day are favored beyond the power of speech to express in having been born in so fascinating

and romantic a period. Not in literature, not in art, but in those things that touch the interest and hold the attention of all classes alike, the last century was as superior to all those that went before as a bird of paradise is superior in beauty and interest to a slug of the field. Science and invention have made our world a spectacular extravaganza, a dream of delight to the senses and the mind. Man has employment for all his eyes and all his ears. Yet always he throws a longing look backward to the barbarism to which eventually he will return.

1902.

THE WAR EVERLASTING

I

FOR thousands of years—doubtless for hundreds of thousands—an incessant civil war has been going on in every country that has even a rudimentary civilization, and the prospect of peace is no brighter to-day than it was at the beginning of hostilities. This war, with its dreadful mortality and suffering, loses none of its violence in times of peace; indeed, a condition of national tranquillity appears to be most favorable to its relentless prosecution: when the people are not fighting foreigners they have more time for fighting one another. This never-ending internal strife is between the law-breaking and the law-abiding classes. The latter is the larger force—at least it is the stronger and is constantly victorious, yet never takes the full benefit of its victory. The commander of an army who should so neglect his opportunities would be recalled in disgrace, for it is a rule of warfare to take the utmost possible advantage of success.

There should be no such person as an habitual criminal, and there would be none if criminals were not permitted to breed. There are several ways to prevent them—some, like perpetual imprisonment, too expensive; others impossible of discussion here. The best practical and discussible way is to kill them. And in this is no injustice. The man who will not live at peace with his countrymen has no inherent right to live at all. The community against which he wages private war has as clear a right to deprive him of his life as of his liberty by imprisonment, or his property by fines.

We grade crimes and punishments only for expediency, not because there are degrees of guilt, for it is as easy to obey the law against theft as the law against murder, and the true criminality of an offense against the state lies in its infraction of the law, not in the damage to its victim. The venerable dictum that, whereas

> It is a sin to steal a pin,
> It is a greater to steal a potater,

is brilliant, but erroneous. Logically there are no degrees of crime; a misdemeanor is

as hardy a defiance of the community as a felony. The distinction is an administrative fiction to facilitate punishment. It is thought that rather than condemn a misdemeanant to perpetual restraint in prison or death on the gallows jurors would acquit him; and indubitably they would. The purpose of these feeble remarks is to lead public opinion upward through flowery paths of reason to a higher philosophy and a broader conception of duty.

My notion is that a great saving of life and property could be effected by extermination of habitual criminals. Some crime would remain. Under the stress of want, men would occasionally take the property of others; crazed by sudden rage, they would sometimes slay; and so forth. But crimes of premeditation would disappear and the enormously expensive machinery of justice could be abolished. One small prison might suffice for an entire nation. A few courts of criminal jurisdiction, an insignificant constabulary, would preserve the peace and punishment could be made truly reformatory—it would not need to be deterrent. In short, the dream of the reformer, with his everlastingly futile methods of deterrence by mental and moral education, could be made to come to pass in

a generation or two by the forthright and merciful plan of effacing the criminal class.

Of course I do not mean to advocate the death penalty for every premeditated infraction of the law, nor do I know how many convictions should be considered as proving the offender an habitual criminal; but certainly I think that, having exceeded the number allowed him, his right to life should be held to have lapsed and he should be removed from this vale of tears forthwith. The fact that a man who habitually breaks the law may be better than another who habitually obeys it, or the fact that he who is convicted may be less guilty than he who escapes conviction, has nothing to do with the matter. If we can not remove all the irreclaimable the greater is the expediency of removing all that we can catch and convict. The law's inadequacy and inconsistency are patent, but they constitute the silliest plea for "mercy" that stupidity has ever invented.

II

This is an age of mercy to the merciless. The good Scriptural code, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," has fallen into the

sere and yellow leaf: it is a creed outworn. We have replaced it with a régime of "reformation," a penology of persuasion. In our own country this sign and consequence of moral degeneration, this power and prevalence of the mollycoddle, are especially marked. We no longer kill our assassins; as a rule, the only disadvantages they suffer for killing us are those incident to detention for acquittal, with a little preaching to remind them of their mortality. Wherefore our homicide list is about twice annually that of the battle of Gettysburg.

The American prison of to-day is carefully outfitted with the comforts of home. Those who succeed in breaking into it find themselves distinctly advantaged in point of housing, and are clothed and fed better than they ever were before, or will be elsewhere. Light employment, gentle exercise, cleanliness, and sound sleep reward them, and when expelled their one ambition is to go back. The "reformation" consists in lifting them to a higher plane of criminality: the man who enters as a stupid thief is graduated a competent forger, and comes back (if he can) with an augmented self-respect and an ambition to kill the warden. Some of us old fogies think

that a prison was best worth its price to the community when it was a place that a rascal would rather die out of than get into; but we are *voces in deserto* and in the ramp and roar of the new penology altogether unheard.

These remarks are suggested by something in France. In that half-sister republic the guillotine, though still a lawful dissuader from the error of assassination, is not at the time of writing in actual use. Murderers are still sentenced to it, but always the sentence is commuted to imprisonment during life or good behavior. Coincidently with the decline of the guillotine there is a notable rise in the rate of assassination. Somebody having had the sagacity to suggest the possibility of something more than an accidental relation between the two phenomena, it occurred to a Parisian editor to collect "views" as to the expediency of again bringing knife and neck together in the good old way. He got views of all sorts of kinds, naturally, and knows almost as much about public opinion as he did before. It is interesting to note that the literary class is nearly a unit against the chopping-block, as was to be expected: persons who work with the head naturally set a high value upon it—an over-appraisement in their

own case, for their heads are somewhat impaired by their habit of housing their hearts in them. There was an honorable minority: Mistral, the Provençal poet, who pointed out (in verse) that a people too squeamish to endure the shedding of criminal blood has taken a long step in the downward path leading to feebleness.

Wherefore I say: Bravo, Mistral! You have done something to prove that not all poets are persons of criminal instincts.

III

There is a general tendency to attribute the popular distrust of the death penalty to the "softening" effect of civilization. One might accept that view without really agreeing with its expounder; for it is the human heart which the expounder believes to have been softened, whereas there is reason to think that the softening process has involved the human head.

As a matter of fact, gentlemen experiencing an inhospitality to the death penalty (including those on the gallows) should not felicitate themselves; their feeling is due to quite other causes. It is mostly a heritage of

unreason from the dark ages when in all Europe laws were made and enforced, with no great scruples of conscience, by conquerors and the descendants of conquerors alien in blood, language and manners. Between these and the masses of the original inhabitants there was no love lost. The peasantry hated their foreign oppressors with a silent antipathy which, like a covered fire, burned with a sullen and more lasting fervor for lack of vent. Hatred of the oppressor embraced hatred of all his works and ways, his laws included, and from hatred of particular laws to hatred of all law the transition was easy, natural and, human nature being what it is, inevitable.

So there is a distinctly traceable connection between wars of conquest and sympathy with crime—between the subjugation of races and their disrespect of law. Here we find the true fountain and origin of anarchism. A country "occupied" implies a people imbruted. It may some time "assimilate" with its conquerors, bringing to the new compound, as in the instance of the Anglo-Saxon combination with the Norman-French, some of the sturdiest virtues of the new national life; but along with these it will surely bring serv-

ile vices acquired during the period of inharmony. There is no doubt that much of whatever turbulence and lawlessness distinguish the American people from the more orderly communities across the sea is the work of William the Conqueror and his men-at-arms. The evil that they did lives after them in the congenial conditions supplied by a republic.

What manner of men the Anglo-Saxons became under Norman dominion before the moral renascence is shown in all the chronicles of the time. A Roman historian has described the Saxon of the period as a naked brute, who lay all day by his fireside sluggish and dirty, always eating and drinking. Even after the assimilation was nearly complete—no longer ago than "the spacious times of great Elizabeth," who, by the way, used to thwack her courtiers on the mazzard when they displeased her—the homogeneous race was a lawless lot. Speaking of their fondness for violent bodily exercise and their inaccessibility to the softer sentiments, Taine says:

> This is why man, who for three centuries had been a domestic animal, was still almost a savage beast, and

the force of his muscles and the strength of his nerves increased the boldness and energy of his passions. Look at these uncultivated men, men of the people, how suddenly the blood warms and rises to their faces; their fists double, their lips press together and their vigorous bodies rush at once into action. The courtiers of that age were like our men of the people. They had the same taste for the exercise of their limbs, the same indifference to the inclemencies of the weather, the same coarseness of language, the same undisguised sensuality.

Before he grew too fat, Henry VIII was so fond of wrestling that he took a fall out of Francis I on the field of the Cloth of Gold.

"That," says the historian of English literature, "is how a common soldier or a bricklayer nowadays tries a new comrade. In fact, they regarded gross jests and brutal buffooneries as amusements, as soldiers and bricklayers do now. * * * They thought insults and obscenity a joke. They were foul-mouthed, they listened to Rabelais' words undiluted, and delighted in conversation that would revolt us. They had no respect for humanity; the rules of proprieties and the habits of good breeding began only in the time of Louis XIV, and by imitation of the French."

Such were "our sturdy Anglo-Saxon ancestors" from whom we inherit our no good opinion of the law and our selfish indisposition to the penalty of death.

ON THE USES OF EUTHANASIA

I

THE proposal to forestall a painful death by a painless one is not, to normal sensibilities, "shocking." If persuaded of its expediency no physician should give it a hesitating advocacy through fear of being thought brutal. It is an error to suppose that familiarity with death and suffering exhausts the springs of compassion in one born compassionate. Like many other qualities, compassion grows by use: none has more of it than the physician, the nurse, the soldier in war. He to whom the menace of an injustice is a louder voice than the call of conscience has no standing in the House of Pain, no warrant to utter judgment as to the conduct of its affairs.

Pain is cruel, death is merciful. Prolongation of a mortal agony is hardly less barbarous than its infliction. Who when sane in mind and body would not choose to guard himself against a futile suffering by an assurance of accelerated release? Every mem-

ory is charged with instances, observed or related, of piteous appeals for death from the white lips of agony, yet how rarely can these formulate the prayer!

To its concession, regulated by law, there is the objection that law is frangible and judgment fallible. But that objection has no greater cogency in this than in other matters; laws we must have, and execute them with such care as we can. Our courts sometimes err in the diagnosis of crime, yet they warrant our trust in the general service of our need. The mariner's compass is fallible, the winds baffle and the waves destroy; yet we have navigation. Even the anarchist cries out against law, not because it does not accomplish its purpose, but because, roughly, it does.

We build civilization with such tools as we have; if we waited for perfect ones the structure would never rise. The juror is no more nearly just and infallible than the physician; if we can entrust ourselves with death as a penalty for crime we need not shrink from the no more awful responsibility of according it as a boon to hopeless pain. In neither case can a blunder do more than hasten the inevitable. "When I was born I cried," said

a philosopher; "now I know why." He did not know why; it was because at the moment of his birth Nature spoke the sentence of his death.

It may be that proponents of euthanasia for suffering incurables are pushing their adventurous feet too far ahead in the march of mind to expect anything better in the nature of encouragement than a copious dead-catting and bad-egging from laggard processionists arear. Sometimes, however, they get decenter treatment than they have the hardihood to claim: occasionally, through the roar of calumniation is heard the voice of dull and dignified protestation, even of argument. For example, *The British Medical Journal* once pointed out, with more gravity than grammar, that "the medical profession has always strongly set its face against a measure that would inevitably pave the way to the grossest abuses, and which would degrade them to the position of executioners."

I don't know that the medical profession speaks with any special authority in a matter of this kind. Perhaps it knows a little better than other trades and professions that cases of hopeless agony are of frequent occurrence, but as to the expediency of reliev-

ing them by the compassionate *coup de grâce* —of that a physician is no better judge than anyone else. As to the fear of being "degraded to the position of executioners," the position is not degrading. The office of executioner—even when execution is punishment, not mercy—is, and should be considered, an almost sacred office. Its popular disrepute harks back to the bad old days when a majority of the people in countries now partly civilized were criminal in act or sympathy, living in hate and terror of the law—the days of Tyburn Tree with its roaring mobs, cheering the malefactor and pelting the hangman. It was not from fear of a merely social reprobation that the mediæval headsman wore a mask; it was from fear of being torn to pieces if ever recognized unguarded in the public street. A man of to-day, ambitious to prove his descent from a criminal ancestry, can most easily do so by damning the hangman. His humble origin is no disgrace to him if he is a good citizen, but it makes him invincible to the suasion of argument against his fad. One might as profitably attempt to reform the color of his eyes or dissuade him from the shape of his nose.

II

"It is a physician's mission to cure disease and alleviate suffering," says Dr. Nehemiah Nickerson. "There is a point beyond which he can not cure disease; after that it is his duty to alleviate suffering."

A mission implies a mandate; a mandate an authority superior to that of the missionary. I do not know from what higher authority a physician derives his own, nor who has the right to lay down the lines within which his activity must lie. Within the civil and the moral law he is a free agent—free to observe or disregard the customs of his trade, as conscience may determine. He has no mandate, no mission.

It is true, however, that to cure disease and to alleviate suffering are purposes commonly recognized as important among those belonging to the practice of medicine. Having failed to accomplish the first, how far may a physician go in accomplishing the second? —that is a question that finds no answer in any imaginary mandate. It is not even answered by the Decalogue, for the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" has so many obvious and necessary limitations that its value

as a guide to conduct is virtually nothing. Dr. Nickerson believes he may go so far as to kill the patient he can not cure. Moreover, he candidly affirms his habit of doing so. I am told that he is a distinguished physician; there is apparently nothing in his frank avowal to lessen his distinction. It would not surprise, indeed, if his fame should take attention from even the officers of the law. To make himself an object of lively interest in quarters where the several kinds of distinction in his profession are commonly overlooked he has only to descend from generals to particulars, naming the patients whom he has turned out of the frying-pan of physical pain into whatever state awaited them, and the means (under Providence) which he employed to that end.

A man may be the best judge of what he is for, but by laymen unskilled in physic it is usually held that a physician's business is not only to cure disease and alleviate suffering, but to prolong life—to save it altogether being impossible, for all must eventually die. But laymen have no mandate always to be right; now and again they have been in error. The righteousness and expediency of releasing an incurable sufferer from the horrors of

life should not be clouded and discredited by an erring advocacy.

When a horse or a dog incurs the mischance of a broken back no question is raised as to the propriety of "putting it out of its misery." Unable to cure it, we kill it, and in doing so feel a comfortable sense of benevolence, a consciousness of having performed a disagreeable duty, of having discharged an obligation inseparable from our dominion over the beasts of the field. It may be said that in the instance of a human being similarly incurable the dominion is lacking. But that does not go to the root of the matter, and is, moreover, untrue; for a helpless man is as much subject to our power as a helpless animal, and as much a charge upon our good will. And in many cases he is as little capable of deciding wisely what is good for him. A wounded bird or squirrel will manifest a strong indisposition to be "put out of misery," by struggling to escape into the bush; a man will sometimes beg for death, even when he does not know himself incurable. If there should be a difference in the treatment of the two in respect of the matter in hand it would seem that the beast should be spared and the man killed.

But Dr. Nickerson's critics think that a different rule should hold, because the man is an immortal soul, whereas the beast is a thing of to-day, divinely ordained to "perish." To this it may be said in reply: All the stronger reason for a reversal of our practice, for in putting the man out of his misery you would not really kill, but only change, him; but the animal having only one life, in taking that you make him "poor indeed," depriving him of all that he has.

That the man is an immortal soul is, however, a proposition which, after centuries of discussion, remains unsettled; and those who hold Dr. Nickerson's view must in conscience forego the advantage of the argument which their generous opponents try to thrust upon them. If we actually knew human beings to be immortal many of the current popular objections to killing them would disappear, and not only soldiers but physicians and assassins could work at their trades with a comparatively free hand, along lines of usefulness not always and entirely divergent. Surely there could be no great wrong in "removing" a good Christian, whether he were ill at ease or not: to translate him to the shining altitudes of Paradise is distinctly to augment the sum

of human happiness. For that matter, it would not be difficult to demonstrate logically the proposition that any Christian may rightly slay any other Christian upon whom he can lay his hands. True, he is forbidden by his religion to do so. All the more noble and generous of him to invite eternal punishment in order to abridge his brother's season of earthly trial, insure him against backsliding and usher him at once into the Kingdom of Delights. In point of mere expediency a general observance of this high duty is open to the objection that it would somewhat reduce the church militant in point of numerical strength. But this is perhaps a digression.

It is urged that not knowing the purposes of the Creator in creating and giving us life, we should endure (and make our helpless friends endure) whatever ills befall, lest by death we ignorantly frustrate the divine plan. Merely pausing to remark that the plan of an omnipotent Deity is not easily frustrated, I should like to point out that in this very ignorance of the purpose of existence lies a justification of putting an end to it. I did not ask for existence; it was thrust upon me without my assent. As He who gave it has permitted it to become an affliction to me, and

has not apprised me of its advantages to others or to Himself, I am not bound to assume that it has any such advantages. If when in my despair I ask why I ought to continue a life of suffering I am uncivilly denied an answer, I am not bound to believe, and in lack of light may be unable to believe, that the answer if given would satisfy me. So the game having gone against me and the dice appearing to be loaded, I may rightly and reasonably quit.

That is the way that a logical patient would probably reason if incurable and in great pain. I confess my inability to discern the fallacy of his argument. Indeed, it seems to me that so far as concerns baffling the divine purpose the patient who calls in a physician and tries to recover is more obviously guilty of attempting to do that than the patient who tries to die. To an understanding that accepts life as a gift from God, illness might very naturally seem a divine intimation of God's altered mind. To one thinking after that fashion voluntary death would necessarily appear as cheerful submission to the divine will, and the taking of medicine as impious rebellion.

The right of suicide implies and carries with it the right to put to death a sufferer in-

curably ill; for the relief which we claim for ourselves we cannot righteously deny to those in our care. We would naturally expect a medical advocate of suicide to kill a patient occasionally, as humanity may suggest and opportunity serve. Dr. Nickerson's frankness is shocking, but on a survey of the entire question it seems a good deal easier to point out his infractions of the law than his disloyalty to reason and the higher sentiments which distinguish us from the priests that perish.

1899.

THE SCOURGE OF LAUGHTER

THE world is growing wiser. Ancient Error is drawing off his defeated forces, the rear guard blinking in the destructive light of reason and science. It has now been ascertained that wrinkles are not caused by care and grief, but by laughing. Such is the dictum of an eminent physician, and it is becoming in us laymen to accept it with due humility and govern ourselves accordingly, subduing the rebellious diaphragm and mortifying the countenance. More easily said than done, doubtless, but what that is easily done is worth doing?

It is to be feared that much of the laughing that is done has its energizing motive in some fundamental principle of human nature not affectable by human will; that we frequently laugh from causes beyond our control, between which and the thing we think we laugh at there is no other relation than coincidence in point of time. That which we happen to have in attention at the time of

the mysterious impulse is mistaken as the cause of the impulse and thought comic, whereas it has no such character, and under other circumstances would have been thought a very serious matter. This view is abundantly confirmed by observation. Men have been known to laugh even when reading the work of the professional humorist, when listening to a story at a club, when in the very presence of a negro minstrel. It is difficult, indeed, to mention environing conditions so dispiriting as to assure gravity.

But there is a kind of laughter essentially different in origin. It is not spontaneous, but induced. It has not, like death, all seasons for its own—is not a purely subjective phenomenon, like hereditary gout, but requires the conspiracy of occasion and stimulation by something outside the laughter; for examples a candidate's assurance of devotion to the public interest, a pig standing on its head, or an editorial article by Deacon George Harvey.

It is clear that by diligence, vigilance and determination this latter kind of laughter can be greatly reduced in frequency, intensity and duration, and its ravages upon the human countenance stayed to that extent. We have only to keep ourselves out of the way of its

exciting causes. If we find ourselves within ear-shot of the candidate attesting his love of the people we can close our ears and retire. Seeing a pig preparing to stand on its head, we may turn away our eyes and fix the mind upon some solemn subject—Mark Twain at the grave of Adam, or Adam at the grave of Mark Twain. Catching the sense of a Harvey editorial we can lay down the paper and put a stone on it. So shall our faces retain their pristine smoothness, enabling us to falsify with impunity the family Bible record with regard to date of birth.

It is of course impossible to enumerate here many of the things to be sought or avoided in order not to laugh and grow wrinkled, but two are so obviously important that they force themselves forward for mention. Our reading should be confined as much as possible to the comic weeklies, and we should give a wide berth to those dailies which deem it their duty to rebuke the commercial spirit of the age. It is believed that by taking these two precautions against the furrowing finger-nails of Mirth one can retain a fresh and youthful rotundity of countenance to the end of one's days and transmit it to those who come after.

THE LATE LAMENTED

HOW long one must be dead before his "relics"—including not only his remains proper, but the several appurtenances thereunto belonging—cease to be "sacred," is a question which has never been settled. London was once divided in opinion, or rather in feeling, as to the propriety of publicly exhibiting the body-linen worn by Charles I when that unhappy monarch had the uncommon experience of losing his head. Not only was this underwear shown, but also some of the royal hair which was cut away by the headsman. Many persons considered the exhibition distasteful and in a measure sacrilegious. But the entire body of the great Rameses has been dug out and is freely shown without provoking a protest.

Rameses was a mightier king than Charles, and a more famous. He was the veritable Pharaoh of sacred history whose daughter (who, I regret to say, was also his wife) found

the infant Moses in the bulrushes. He could also point with pride to his record in profane history, and was, altogether, a most respectable person. Between the power, splendor and civilization of the Egypt of Rameses and the England of Charles there is no comparison: in the imperishable glory of the former the latter seems a nation of savage pigmies. Why, then, are the actual remains of the one monarch considered a fit and proper "exhibit" in a museum and the mere personal adornments of the other too sacred for desecration by the public eye? Probably political and ethnic considerations have something to do with it: perhaps in Cairo the sentiment would be the other way, though the stoical indifference of successive Egyptian Governments to mummy-mining by the thrifty European does not sustain that view.

Schliemann and many of his moling predecessors have dug up and removed the sleeping ancients from what these erroneously believed to be their last resting-places in Asia Minor and the other classic countries, without rebuke, and the funeral urn of an illustrious Roman can be innocently haled from its pigeon-hole in a *columbarium*. We open the burial mounds of our Indian predecessors

and pack off their skulls with never a thought of wrong, and even the bones of our own early settlers when in course of removal to make way for a new city hall are treated with but scant courtesy. There seems to be no statute of limitations applicable to the sanctity of tombs; every case is judged on its merits, with a certain loose regard to local conditions and considerations of expediency.

It was an ancient belief that the shade of even the most worthy deceased could not enter Elysium so long as the body was unburied, but no provision was made for expulsion of those already in if their bodies were exhumed and used as "attractions" for museums. So we may reasonably hope that the companions of Agamemnon contemplate the existence of Schliemanns with philosophic indifference; and doubtless Rameses the Great, who, according to the religion of his country, had an immortality conditioned on the preservation of his mortal part, is as well content that it lie in a museum as in a pyramid.

DETHRONEMENT OF THE ATOM

IT is of course to be expected that the advance of scientific knowledge will destroy, here and there, a cherished illusion. It was so when Darwin showed us that we are not made of mud, but have "just growed." At least that is what Darwin is by many held to have done, and deep is their resentment. In a general way it may be said that the path of scientific progress is strewn with the mouldering bones of our dearest creations.

To this melancholy company must now be added the precious Atom. It has had a fairly long reign, has the atom; the youths who first worshiped at its shrine are in the lean and slippered pantaloon stage of existence. It will be all the harder for them to see their idol depedestaled.

That the atom was the ultimate unit of matter, the absolute smallest thing in the universe, a fraction incapable of further division—that is what we had been commanded to believe

by those in authority over the many things of science. And with such powers of conviction as we are gifted withal we had believed.

Now, what do we hear—what do we hear? Why, that an atom is an aggregation of electrons! These are so much smaller than atoms that the latter can be easily conceived as cut in halves—nay, chopped into hash. Before the inven—that is to say, the discovery—of the electron such a thing as that was unthinkable. So, at each enlargement of the field of knowledge the human mind receives new powers. The time may come when we shall be able (with an effort) to conceive the division of an electron.

The difference in magnitude, or rather minitude, between our old friend the atom and this new though doubtless excellent thing, the other thing, is characteristically expounded thus:

"If an electron is represented by a sphere an inch in diameter, an atom on the same scale is a mile and a half. Or, if an atom is represented by the size of a theater, an electron is represented on the same scale by a printer's full stop."

The electron, it seems, is not only unthinkably little; it is impalpable, invisible, inaud-

ible and probably insipid and inodorous. In brief, it is immaterial. It is not matter, though matter is composed of it. That is easy to understand if one has a scientific mind.

Not only are electrons immaterial, or at least inconceivably attenuated; they are immense distances apart—immense in comparison with their bulk. Likewise, they are inconceivably rapid in motion about a common center. The electrons forming a single atom are analogous to our solar system, but whether there is a big electron in the center science does not as yet tell us.

When a steam hammer descends upon a piece of steel it merely strikes the outside of an infinite aggregation of moving, impalpable things widely separated in space. But they stop the hammer.

Scientists know these facts, and we know that they know them—this is our delightful part in the matter. But we do not know how they know them—that is not granted to our humble degree of merit. As we grow in grace, we may perhaps hope to be told, preferably in words of one syllable, how they learned it all; how they count the electrons; how they measure them; with what kind of instrument they determine their actual and

comparative magnitudes, and so forth. No doubt the columns of the newspapers are open to them for explanation and exposition even now.

In the meantime let us be pleasant about it. It is more amiable to believe without comprehending than to comprehend without believing.

DOGS FOR THE KLONDIKE

THE spectacle of great tides of men sweeping hither and thither across the face of the globe under suasion of so mean a passion as cupidity, as the waters of ocean are led by the moon, is more spectacular than pleasant. See in it however much one prophetically may of future empire and civilizations growing where none grew before—hear as one can on every breeze that blows from the newest and richest placers the hum of the factory to be, the song of the plowman (such as it is) and the drone of the Sunday sermon, replacing "the petulant pop of the pistol"—yet one can not be altogether insensible to the hideousness of the motive out of which all these pleasing results are to come. Doubtless in looking at the pond-lily a healthy mind makes light account of the muck and slime at the bottom of the pond, whence it derives its glories; but while the muck and slime only are in evidence, the water and the flower mere presumptions of the future, the case is a trifle different.

It is conceded that out of this mad movement to the Klondike great good may come. Many of those who go to dig will remain to plow, jocundly driving their teams afield to tickle the tundra till it laughs in pineapples, bananas and guavas. It is not denied that great cities (with roof-gardens and slums) will rise like exhalations along the mighty Yukon, nor that that noble stream will know the voice of the gondolier and the lute of the lover. In place of the moose and the caribou, the patient camel will kneel in the shade of palms to receive his cargo of dates, spices and native silks.

But just now the Klondike region is a trifle raw. In the stark simplicity of life there men do not veil their characters with a shining hypocrisy; all, by their presence in that unutterable country, being convicted of the greed for gold, every man feels that it is useless to profess any of the virtues; as the discharged inmate of a reformatory institution has no choice but a life of crime. Later, when the beneficent influences that track the miner to his gulch shall have set up a more complex social system under which the presumption of a base motive may be less strong, we shall hear, doubtless, of Dawsonians and

even Skagwegians who would take the trouble to deny an accusation of theft and to affirm a disposition to go to church between drinks on a Sunday.

Ugly as these "rushes" to mining regions seem to one unskilled in use of the muck-rake and a stranger to avarice—discouraging as they are to the good optimist, and correspondingly delightful to his natural enemy, the wicked pessimist—yet it must be confessed that in the present rush there is one feature that goes far in mitigation of its general unpleasantness: it has created in distant and unwholesome regions a demand for the domestic dog.

For the first time in his immemorial existence this comfortable creature has thrown open to him a wide field of usefulness of exactly the kind that he deserves—a long way from the comforts of home, imperfectly supplied with beef-steaks, cold as blazes, with plenty of hard work and the worst society in the world!

"Good long-haired dogs" are "quoted" in Dawson at one hundred and fifty to two hundred dollars. Such prices ought to result in drawing all that kind of dogs out of the rest of the country, which in itself would be a

great public benefaction; for the popular belief in the superior virtues of the long-haired dog is a lamentable error. The type and exemplar of that variety, the so-called Newfoundland, is, in point of general, all-round unworth, superior to any living thing that we have the advantage to know. Not only is his bite more deadly than that of the ordinary snapdog, but that of the fleas which he cherishes is peculiarly insupportable. The fleas of all other dogs merely sadden; those of the Newfoundland madden to crime! His fragrance, moreover, is less modest than that of even the Skye terrier; it is distinctly declarative. A charming fiction ascribes to him a tender solicitude for drowning persons, especially children; but history may be searched in vain for a single authentic proof—and history is not over-scrupulous in the matter of veracity. Every one has heard and read of rescues from drowning, by Newfoundland dogs, but no human being ever saw one. It is to be hoped that the hyperborean demand for "good long-haired dogs" will not fall upon heedless ears.

The Great Dane is not a "long-haired" dog, but he is large and strong, and should be wanted in the Klondike country. His size

and strength would there be his best recommendations; here they are his worst. Having a giant's strength he uses it as a giant, and his multiplication in the land is a terror and a curse. His manner of unloading a bicycle has been justly described as the acme of inconsiderateness. Moreover, he is increasing all the time in magnitude as well as in quantity; at his present rate of growth he will within a decade or so overtop the horse and outnumber the sheep. There will be no resisting him. But what an excellent roadster he would be in Alaska! The brevity of his hair is really an advantage: in calculating his load less allowance will need to be made for icicles. Indubitably the value of a Great Dane in Dawson is at least one thousand dollars.

The most pernicious varieties of the species —the small animated pestilences upon which our ladies waste so much of the affection which, it is reverently submitted, might with better results be bestowed upon the males of their own species—these pampered laplings are unfortunately not useful for draught purposes in the Arctic. One of them could not pull a tin plate from Squottacoota to Nickalinqua. So they are not "quoted" in the

Dawson market reports. But something has been overlooked: the incomparable excellence of their flesh! It is respectfully suggested that a few of these curled darlings and glossy sweethearts be sent to the Klondike, suitably canned and spiced as commercial samples. The miners may be assured that the flesh is not only wholesome, but is entirely free from that objectionable delicacy that distinguishes, for example, the yellow-legged pullet; it is honestly rank and strong and has plenty of "chew" in it—just the right kind of meat for founders of empires and heralds of civilization. A dozen cans of Dandy Dinmont or King Charles Spaniel should have in Dawson an actual value of three thousand dollars, but doubtless could be supplied at a much smaller price. So much as that would hardly be needed in any one outfit, for such is the nutritious property of small dog that most persons would find a single can of it enough.

We are able to supply all Alaska and the Northwest Territory with dogs and with dog. Every township has always a surplus. I invite attention to our peerless canine wealth and to the eminent fitness of its units for service on the northern trails and along the north-

ern alimentary canal. Before purchasing elsewhere let the judicious Klondiker examine our stock. He is too far away to look at it, but when the wind is in the southeast that is needless.

1898.

MONSTERS AND EGGS

THE Gila Monster has at last succeeded in disclosing to Science the trend of his appetite toward that comestible with the strong foreign accent, the gull's egg. That the product of the merry sea-fowl is the creature's regular diet in his desert habitat circumjacent to Death Valley is a proposition so obvious that one would have thought it self-evident, even to him on whose humble birth fair science frowned not; yet the discovery appears to have been made by accident, as is so frequently the case with great truths which seem so simple when we come to know them.

Now that his Monstership's favorite food is no longer a matter of controversy to scientists and concern to the tenderfoot, we may reasonably hope that the interesting but hitherto misunderstood and calumniated reptile may be domesticated among us; for there is no longer a doubt of our ability to support him in the style to which he is accustomed,

nourishing him to a proper growth and suitable flavor for the table.

In the gastronomical curriculum of the southern Red Man the Gila Monster has always held an honorable place when well roasted by exposure to the climate of his choice; and that aboriginal trencherman's dietetic practices have frequently pointed the way to reform at the tables of the Paleface, a notable instance being his advocacy of the potato and the tobacco leaf, in the consumption of which he had long been happy before he discovered Columbus and Sir Walter Raleigh. In the spud and the quid we have, doubtless, his best benefactions to Caucasian gastronomy; but if the seed of his example with regard to the Gila Monster do not fall upon the stony soil of a reasonless conservatism the minor pleasures of existence may be augmented by an addition distinctly precious, and the female gull be accepted and venerated as a philanthropist of the deepest dye.

By knowledge not only of the gratifying fact that the Monster eats gulls' eggs, but of the at least interesting one that he does *not* eat the Eastern tourist, we attain to something like an understanding of his disposition, which is seen to be peaceable and hu-

mane. It is therefore probable that he is no more venomous when he bites than poisonous when bitten. The current stories attesting the noxiousness of his tooth have their origin, perhaps, in a strong sense of his destitution of beauty; for it must be frankly confessed that the impulchritude of his expression and general make-up is disquieting to the last degree. But, for that matter, so is that of the toad—not only the horned toad, which is known to be harmless, but the common hop-toad of the garden, whose bite is believed by some to be actually wholesome. Shakspeare was of a different conviction, but Shakspeare was not very strong in zoology, nor was he over-conscientious in verification of all the statements that he put into the mouths of his characters—a circumstance which seems to have been overlooked by those who are most addicted to quoting him.

Science having done so much for the Gila Monster and, in a sense, made him its own, will be expected by the public to carry the good work forward by settling, once for all, the vexed question of his brotherhood to the rattlesnake and the woman scorned. Is he really venomous? With a view to determining the point it is to be hoped that some un-

selfish investigator may permit himself to be bitten by the accused; and I think a very proper person to make the experiment is Dr. Theodore Roosevelt, the illustrious zoölogist who wrote the monograph on the invertebracy of the spineless cactus.

MUSIC

LET him to whom, as to me, nature has denied "an ear for music," or circumstance an opportunity for its education, take heart and comfort: he has escaped a masterful temptation to commit nonsense in the first degree. Doubtless there are music makers and music lovers who can write and speak of the art with a decent regard to the demands of common sense, but doubtless they don't; their history is a record of ignored opportunities. As to the others—the chaps who push in between our hearing and our understanding—they possibly "play by note," but they write "by ear." They say whatever sounds well to themselves, and there they leave it. Theirs is the art of sound and they expound its principles with due observance of its results: in speaking of it they are satisfied to make a pleasant noise. The louder the noise of their exposition, the more glorious the art which it expounds. As members of mystic brotherhoods are bound by oath not to divulge the solemn secrets which they

do not possess; as the married have a tacit undertaking to wreathe their chains with flowers, smile away their wounds, and exhibit as becoming ornaments the handles of the daggers rusting in their hearts; as priesthoods plate with gold their empty shrines; as the dead swear in stone and brass that they were virtuous and great—so the musical are in conspiracy to magnify and exalt their art. It is a pretty art: it is rich in elements of joy, purveying to the sense a refined and keen delight. But it is not what they say it is. It is not what the uninitiated believe it. What is?

I am led to these reflections—provoked were the better word—by reading one Krehbiel. "Wagner," Mr. Krehbiel explains, "strove to express artistic truths, not to tickle the ear, and therefore his work will stand, while Italian opera, which is founded on sensual enjoyment, must pass away." A more amusing *non sequitur* it would be difficult for the most accomplished logician to construct. Because the city is founded on a rock it will topple down! I think I could name several sorts of sensual enjoyment which give promise of enduring as long as the senses. Among them I should give a high place to whatever kind of music the sense of hearing most en-

joys. If posterity is going to be such an infinite fool as to stop its ears to sounds which please them, I thank Heaven that I live in antiquity.

The enjoyment of music is a purely sensual enjoyment. It "tickles the ear," and it does nothing else. The ear being skilfully tickled after the fashion which the composer and the executant understand, emotion ensues; but not thought, save by association—by memory. Music does not touch the springs of the intellect. It never generated a process of reasoning, nor expressed a truth, "artistic" or other, which could be formulated in a definitive proposition. It has no intellectual character whatever. I have heard this disputed scores of times, but never by one who had himself much intellect. And, in truth, musicians, if I must say it, are not commonly distinguished above their fellows by mental capacity. The greater their gift, the less they know; and when you find a tremendously skilful and enthusiastic executant you will have as nearly sensual an animal as you care to catch.

To those having knowledge of the essential meaning of music, its original place among the influences that wrought their results upon primitive man, this will seem natural and

sequent. Music was originally vocal; before men became wise enough and deft enough to make instruments they merely sang, as the birds do now, and certain animals—the latter pretty badly, it must be confessed. But why did the primitive man and woman sing? To commend themselves in the matter of love, as the birds do, and the beasts. Abundant vestiges of this practice survive among us. The young woman who bangs her piano and her hair has a single motive in the double habit. She is hardly conscious of it; she has inherited it along with the desire to brandish her eyes, and otherwise manslay. Consider, my tuneless youth, how slender is your chance in rivalry with the fellow who can sing. He will "knock you out" with a bar of music better than a Chinese highbinder could with a bar of iron. It did not occur to our good arboreal ancestor (him of the prehensile tail, aswing upon his branch) to address his wood-notes wild to a mixed audience for gate-money; he sought to charm a single pair of ears, and those more hairy than critical. Later, as the race went on humaning, there grew complexity of sentiment and varying emotional needs, for the gratification whereof song took on a matching complexity and vari-

ance. There were war songs, and death songs, and hunting songs, harvest songs and songs of adoration. Wood and metal were taught to perform acceptably.

> The shells of tortoises were made to sing,
> And, touched in tenderness, the captive string.

Did it ever occur to you, intelligent reader, that the simplest musical instrument is a more astonishing invention than the talking phonograph? But the human love-tone is the soul and base of the system; and should men and women henceforth be born happily married the entire musical edifice would fade and vanish like a palace of clouds.

MALFEASANCE IN OFFICE

IN these days of societies for the prevention of this and that, why can not we have a Society for the Prevention of Malfeasance in Office? More than half of all the money paid in taxes is in one way or another stolen. From the humblest janitorship up to the chief magistracy of the state (both inclusive) the offices are held by men of whom a majority are as scurvy knaves as many of those in the penitentiaries. There is no exaggeration in this statement; it is literally, absolutely true. Then why, it may be asked, does not the press expose all this corruption? For many reasons, among them these: the corruption of the press; the circumstance that malfeasance in office is no news; the absence of a public opinion that will do more than passively approve, whereas the private animosities engendered by exposure are active, implacable, and dangerous; the absence of such a society as the one suggested. An additional reason may be called, softly, the rascality of the courts. Not all horses

are sorrel, and not all judges rogues. Not all pigs have spiral tails, nor all prosecuting attorneys crooked morals. Nevertheless he who lightly incurs law suits, relying upon the justice of his cause, has no need to wear motley, for assuredly none will think him other than a fool.

It is in our courts that officers and members of the Society for the Prevention of Malfeasance in Office would be least welcome and most terrifying. Their presence would be to our boss-made judges and thrifty district attorneys what the sudden apparition of the late Mr. Henry Bergh used to be to draygentlemen engaged in tormenting their horses. It would be easy, without stopping to take thought or breath, to name a score of judges of our higher courts, in present incumbency or newly retired, whose perturbations from that cause would attain to the dignity of a panic.

The thing is easily feasible. It requires, mainly, liberal endowment by that class of the wealthy whose interests do not lie in the stability of misgovernment. Zealous and incorruptible officers to investigate, able attorneys to prosecute, honest newspapers to assist and spread the light. These will come of

themselves. A few successful prosecutions of official offenders, a few impeachments and removals, a few hitherto invincible rascals sent to the penitentiary, a little educating of the people to the fact that a new power for good is risen among them, and money will come in abundantly. Rightly conducted the Society will become a popular favorite, accredited alike by alliance of the wise and hostility of knaves, and fairly good government by unofficial supervision become an accomplished fact. Apparently there is no other way whereby it may be obtained.

Of course the Society need not be named what I have called it, and the scope of its activity should be greater than that name implies. It should aim to prevent (by exposure and punishment) not only malfeasance in office, but all manner of sins and stupidities in public life. Our existing machinery for obtaining honest and intelligent government is altogether inadequate; it breaks down at all points and—fatal defect!—it is not automatic. The laws do not enforce themselves—not even the laws for enforcing the laws. The "wheels of justice" are easily "blocked" because nobody is concerned to put his shoulder to them. Who will come forward and pro-

vide a motor for this inert and sluggish mechanism? Here is as good an opportunity for distinction as one can want. But let no one seek to grasp it who has not a strong hand and a hard head; there will be bloody noses and cracked crowns enow, God wot. If one have a taste for fighting he can have it by the bellyful. If he enjoy ridicule, calumniation, persecution, they shall come to him in quantity to fit his appetite. Maylike he shall have knowledge of how it feels to sleep in field-feathers on stone. But assuredly there are for that man, if he be of the right kidney, an imperishing renown and "the thanks of millions yet to be." Let him stand forth. Let him fall to and organize. Let him tout the country for subscriptions and begin. In the end he shall find that the little fire that he kindled has spread over all the land with a crackling consumption of rascalry; and his children's children shall warm them in the memory.

1881.

FOR STANDING ROOM

AT no time in the world's history have the relations between laborers and employers of labor received so much attention as now. All men who think are thinking of them, the meditation being quickened by the importance of the interests involved, the sharp significance of some of their observed phenomena and the conditions entailing them. Among these last, one of the most important is overpopulation in civilized countries; and it is only in such countries that any controversy has arisen between—to speak in the current phrase—capital and labor. Despite the magnitude and frequency of modern wars, the population of all civilized countries increases in the most astonishing way. In the six great nations of Europe the increase since the Napoleonic wars has been between fifty and sixty per cent. In this country our progression is geometrical —we double our population every twenty-five years!

Conquest and commerce have brought the

whole world under contribution to the strong nations. Inter-communication has reduced the areas of privation and almost effaced those of famine. Railways and steamships and banks and exchanges have diminished the friction between producer and consumer. By sanitary and medical science the average length of human life has been increased. Chemistry has taught us how to fertilize the fields, forestry and engineering how to prevent both inundation and drought, invention how to master the adverse forces of Nature and make alliance with the friendly ones by labor-saving machinery, so that the work of one man will now sustain many in idleness—with no lack of persons who by birth, breeding, disposition and taste are eligible to sustentation. The milder sway of modern government, the elimination of the "gory tyrant" as a factor in the problem of existence and the better protection of property and life have had, even directly, no mean influence on the death rate. These and many other causes have combined to make the conditions of life so comparatively easy that an extraordinary impetus has been given to the business of living; mankind may be said to have taken it up as a congenial pursuit. The cloud of despair that shadowed the face

of all Europe during those centuries of misrule and ignorance fitly called the Dark Ages has lifted, and multitudes are thronging into the sunshine. It is not a perfect beam, but its warmth and lumination are incomparably superior to anything of which the older generations ever dreamed. But the result is over population, and the result of over population is war, pestilence, famine, rapine, immorality, ignorance, anarchy, despotism, slavery, decivilization—depopulation!

This is man's eternal round; this is the course of "progress"; in this circle moves the "march of mind." The one goal of civilization is barbarism; to the condition whence it emerged a nation must return, and every invention, every discovery, every beneficent agency hastens the inevitable end. An ancient civilization would last a thousand years; confined to the same boundaries, a modern civilization would exhaust itself in half that time; but by emigration and interchange we uphold ourselves till all can go down together. One people cannot relapse till all similar peoples are ready.

Already we discern ominous instances of the working of the universal law. Consciously or unconsciously, all the modern

statesmen of Europe are contesting for "territorial aggrandizement." They desire both extension of boundaries and colonial possessions. They quarrel with the statesmen of neighboring nations on this pretext and on that, and send their armies of invasion to capture and hold provinces. They dispatch their navies to distant seas to take possession of unconsidered islands. They must have more of the earth's surface upon which to settle their surplus populations. All the wars of modern Europe have that ultimate, underlying cause.

The battle knows not why it is fought. It is for standing room. If it were not for the horrors of war the horrors of peace would be appalling. Peace is more fatal than war, for all must die, and in peace more are born. The bullet forestalls the pestilence by proffering a cleaner and decenter death.

What has all this to do with the labor question? "Industrial discontent" has many causes, but the chief is over-population. (In this country it is as yet a "coming event," but its approach is rapid, and already it has "cast its shadow before.") Where there are too many producers they are thinned out to make an army, which serves the double purpose of keeping the rest of them in subjection and re-

sisting the pressure from without. Armies are to fight with; no nation dares long maintain one in idleness; it is too costly for a toy; the people burn to see it put to practical use. They do not love it; they promise themselves the advantage of seeing it killed; but when the killing begins their blood is up and they want to go soldiering.

Our labor troubles—our strikes, boycotts, riots, dynamitation, can have but one outcome. We are not exempt from the inexorable. We shall soon hear a general clamor for increase of the army—to protect us against aggression from the east and the west. We shall have the army.

That is as far as one cares to follow the current of events into the dubious regions of prediction. What lies beyond is momentous enough to be waited for; but any man who fails to discern the profound significance of the events amongst which he is moving to-day may justly boast himself impregnable to the light.

THE JEW

A NOTED Jewish rabbi has been uttering his mind concerning "manufacturers of mixed marriages"—clergymen, that is to say, who marry Christians to Jewesses and Jews to Christianesses. In the opinion of this gentleman of God such marriages are accursed, and those of his pious brethren who assist the devil in bringing them about are imperfectly moral. Doubtless it is desirable that the parties to a marriage should cherish the same form of religious error, lest in their zeal to save each other's immortal part they lay too free a hand upon the part that is mortal. But domestic infelicity is not the evil that the learned doctor has in apprehension: what he fears is nothing less momentous than the extinction of Judaism! On consideration it appears not unlikely that in a general blending of races that result would ensue. But what then?—will the hand of some great anarch let the curtain fall and universal darkness cover all? Will the passing of Judaism be attended

with such discomfortable befallings as the wreck of matter and the crush of worlds?

Good old Father Time has seen the genesis, development, decay and effacement of thousands of religions far more ancient and quite as well credentialed as that of Israel. The most daring of that faith's expounders will hardly claim for it an age exceeding a half-dozen millenniums; whereas the least venturesome anthropologian will affirm for the human race an antiquity of hundreds. It is hardly likely that the world has ever been without great religions, of which all but a few (so new that they smell of paint and varnish) are as dead as the dodo. No portents foreshadowed their extinction, no cataclysms followed. The world went spinning round the sun in its immemorial way; men lived and loved, fought, laughed, cursed, lied, gathered gold and dreamed of an after-life as before. No mourners follow the hearse of a dead religion, no burial service is read at the grave. Does the good rabbi really believe that the faith which he professes, rooted in time, will flourish in eternity? Can he suppose that its fate will be different from that of its predecessors, whose temples, rearing their fronts in great cities, the seats of mighty civilizations in every

part of the habitable globe, have perished with the empires that they adorned, and left not a vestige nor a memory behind? Does he think that of all the incalculable religions that have swept in successive dream-waves the ocean of mystery his alone marks a continuous current setting toward some shining shore of truth and life and bearing thither all ships obedient to its trend?

I can not help thinking that the pious rabbi would better serve his people by less zeal in broadening and blackening the delimiting lines by which their foolish fathers circumscribed their sympathies and interests and made their race a peculiar people, peculiarly disliked. The best friend of the Jews is not he who confirms them in their narrow and resented exclusiveness, but he who persuades them of its folly, advises them to a larger life than is comprised in rites and rituals, the ceremonies and symbolisms of a long-dead past, and strives to show them that the world is wider than Judea and God more than a private tutor to the children of Israel.

Why do they fear effacement by absorption? If the entire Jewish race should disappear (as sooner or later all races do) that would not mean that the Jews were dead, but that

Judaism was dead. No single life would have gone out because of that, and all that is good in the race would live, suffusing and perhaps ennobling the characters of races having still a name. All that is useful and true in Jewish law and Jewish letters and Jewish art would be preserved to the world; the rest could well be spared. Even the rabbis' occupation would not be gone: they would thrive as priests of another faith. Man is not likely to cease forming himself into "congregations," for he likes to see his teachers "close to." Even if preaching were abolished many kinds of light and profitable employment would remain.

As matters now are, mixed marriages—between Jew and Gentile—are not to be advised. But matters are now not as they should be, nor does our holy friend's teaching tend to make them so. Let the Jew learn why he is subject to hate and persecution by the Gentile. It is not, as he professes to think, and doubtless does think, because his ancestors, ages ago, denied the Godhood and demanded the life of another Jew. Other races and sects deny Christ without offense; and the Gentile who daily crucifies him afresh is no less active in dislike of the Jew than the most devout Christ-

ian of them all. Christ and Christianity have nothing to do with it. Nor is the explanation found in the Jew's superior thrift, nor in any of those commercial qualities whereby, legitimately or illegitimately, he gets the better of his Gentile competitor; though those advantages too pitilessly used against a stupid and improvident peasantry have sometimes compelled his expatriation by sovereigns who cared no more what he believed than what he ate.

The Christians will cease to dislike and persecute the Jews when the Jews abandon their affronting claim to special and advantageous relations with the Lord of All. The claim would be no less irritating if well founded, as many Christians believe that once it was. When has it not been observed that a favorite child is hated by its brothers and sisters? Did not the brethren of Joseph seek his undoing? In missing the lesson of it the Jew "recks not his own rede." When was it not thought an insult to say, "I am holier than thou," and when did not small minds "strike back" with brutal hands? The Christian mind is a small mind, the Christian hand a brutal hand.

The Jew may reply: "I do not say so;

in the pulpit I forbear to denounce other peoples and other creeds as outside the law and devoid of the divine grace." In words he does not say so, but he says so with emphasis in his care to preserve his racial and religious isolation; in his practice of self-mutilation and the affronting reasons in which he disguises his consciousness of the shame of it; in his maintenance of a spiritual quarantine; in the diligence with which he repairs time's ravages in his Great Wall, lest Nature take advantage of the breach and some caroling Gentile youth leap lightly through to claim a Jewish maid. In a thousand ways, all having for purpose the safeguarding of his racial isolation in a ghetto of his own invention, the orthodox Jew shouts aloud his conviction of his superior holiness and peculiar worth. Naturally, the echo is not unmixed with Christian denial, formulated too frequently into unrighteous decrees by the voice of authority.

None than I can have a greater regard for the Jewish character, as found at its best in the higher types of the Jewish people, and not found at all in those members of the race who alone are popularly thought of as Jews. None than I can have a deeper detestation of the

spirit at the back of persecution of the Jews, in all its forms and degrees. Rather than have a hand in it I would have no hand. Yet I venture to say that if a high degree of contributory negligence, constituting a veritable invitation to evil, is foolish the calamity entailed is entitled to a place in the list of expectable phenomena; and if a certain presumptuous self-righteousness is bad its natural and inevitable punishment is not entirely undeserved.

In the mud that the Christian hand flings at the Jew there is a little gold; in the Christian's dislike of him there is what the assayers and analysts call "a trace" of justice. He who thinks that whole races of men, through long periods of time, hate for nothing has considered history to little purpose and knows not well the constitution of the human mind. It should seriously be considered whether, not the chief, but the initial, fault may not be that of the Jew, who was not always the unaggressive non-combatant, the long-suffering victim, that centuries of oppression and repression have tended to make him. If we may believe his own historical records, which the Christian holds in even higher veneration than he does himself, he was once a very bad neigh-

bor. No worse calamity could then befall a feeble people than the attention of an Israelite king. Believing themselves the salt of the earth, his warlike subjects had always in pickle a rod for every Gentile back. Every contiguous tribe which did not accept their God incurred their savage hatred, expressed in incredible cruelties. They ruled their little world with an iron hand, dealing damnation round and forcing upon their neighbors a currency of bloody noses and cracked crowns. Even now they have not renounced their irritating claim to primacy in the scale of being, though no longer able to assert it with fire and sword. It is significant, however, that here in the new world, at a long remove from the inspiring scenes of their petty power and gigantic woes—their parochial glory and imperial abjection—they have somewhat abated the arrogance of their pretensions; and in obvious consequence, the brutal Christian hand is lifted more languidly against them in service of a softened resentment.

Being neither Christian nor Jew, and with only an intellectual interest in their immemorial feud,I find in it, despite its most tragic and pathetic incidents, something essentially comic—something to bring a twinkle to the eye

of an Apuleius and draw the merriment of a Rabelais, "laughing sardonically in his easy chair." That two races of reasoning beings, inhabiting one small planet and having the same sentiments, passions, virtues, vices and interests, should pass loveless centuries, distrusting, hating and damaging each other is so ludicrous a proposition that no degree of familiarity with it as a fact suffices to deprive it altogether of its opéra bouffe character. Nevertheless it is not to be laughed away. It must be dealt with seriously, if at all; and it is encouraging to observe that more and more it is taking attention in this country, where it can be considered with less heat, and therefore more light, than elsewhere.

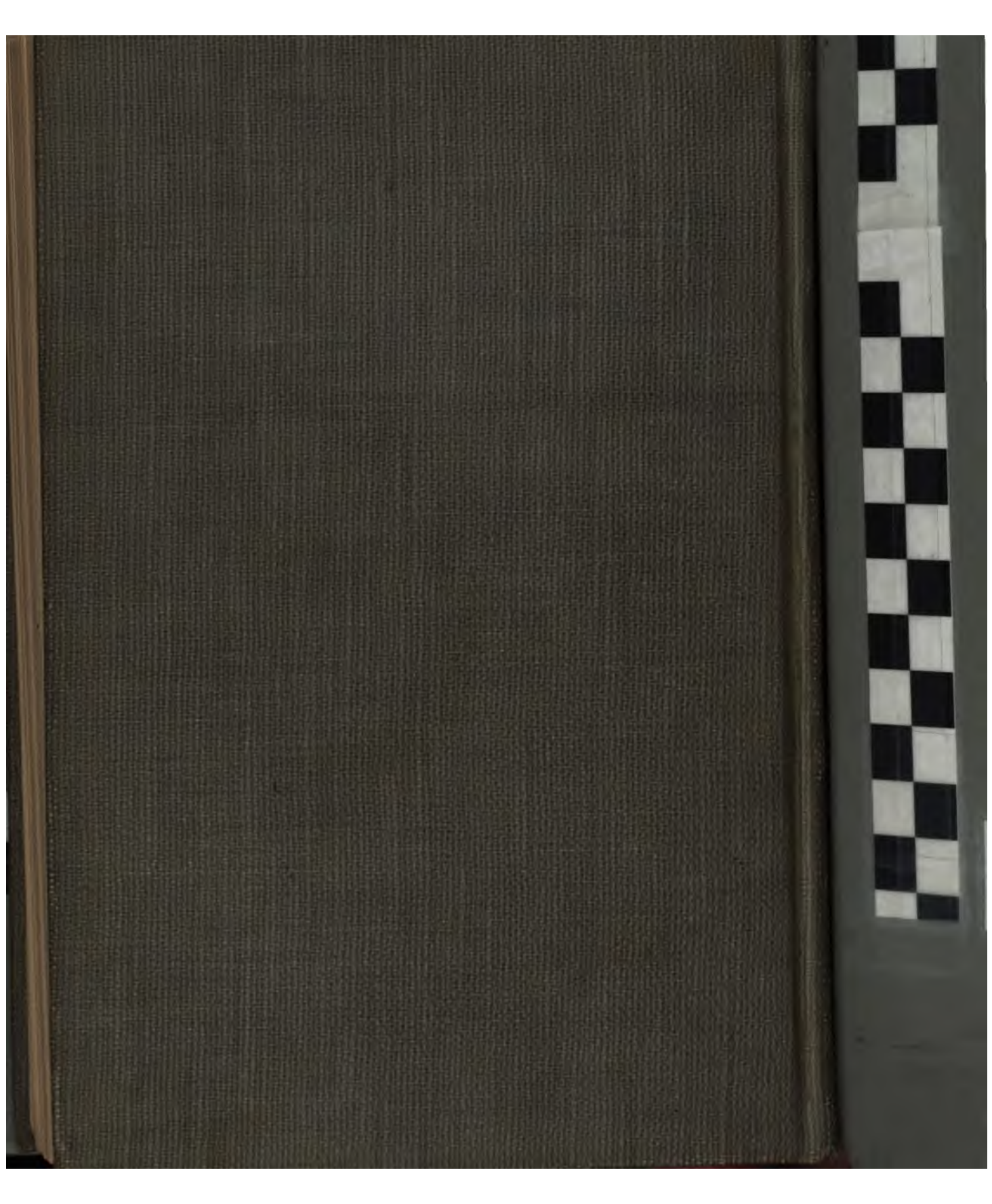
If the Jew cares for justice he must learn, first, that it does not exist in this world, and second, that the least intolerable form of injustice goes by favor with the hand of fellowship; and the hand of fellowship is not offered to him who stands austerely apart saying: "I am holier than thou." America has given to the Jews political and civic equality. If they want more more is attainable. But it is their move.

1898.

WHY THE HUMAN NOSE HAS A WESTERN EXPOSURE

WHEN Bishop Berkeley had the good luck to write,

> Westward the course of empire takes it way,

he suggested a question which has not, to my knowledge, been adequately answered: Why? Why do all the world's peoples that move at all move ever toward the west, a human tide, obedient to the suasion of some mysterious power, setting up new "empires" superior to those enfeebled by time, as is the fate of empires? Many a thoughtful observer has confessed himself unable to name the law at the back or front of the movement. Yet a law there must be: things of that kind do not come about by accident.

A natural law is one thing, a cause is another, and the cause of this universal tendency to "go West" may not lie too deep for discovery. May it not be that the glory of the